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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

LONDON:

THE
POLITICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM HORDS WORTH.

LONDON :
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

A NEW EDITION.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

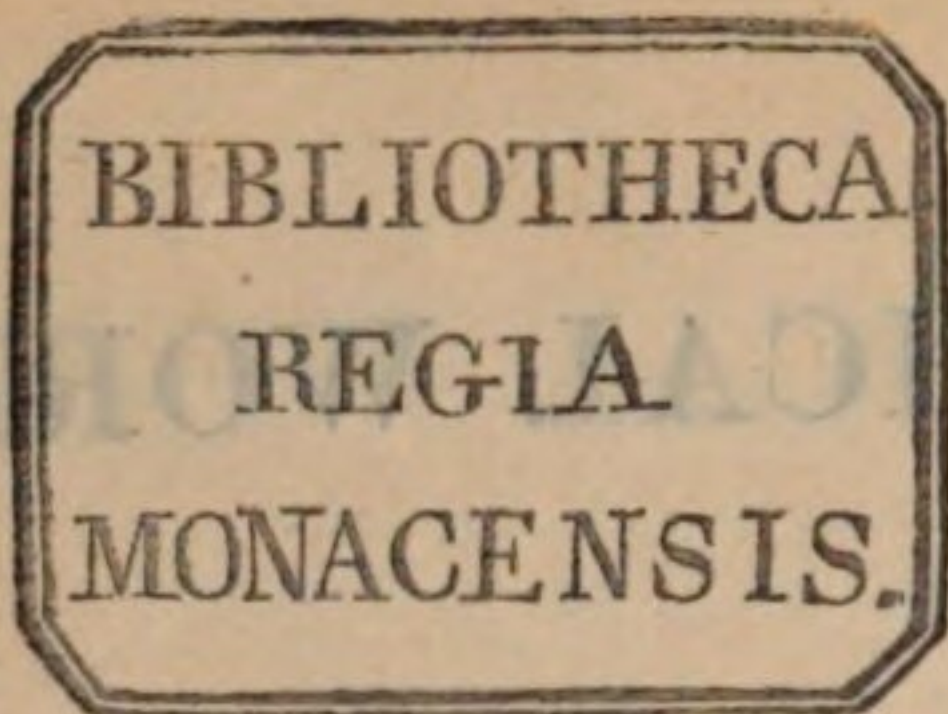
VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR
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1832.

112. J.



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

A NEW EDITION.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR
JOHN JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, AND
TATTON-STREET-BOW.

1831.

TO

SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT,

BART.

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE,

ACCEPT my thanks for the permission given me to dedicate these Volumes to you. — In addition to a lively pleasure derived from general considerations, I feel a particular satisfaction; for, by inscribing these Poems with your Name, I seem to myself in some degree to repay, by an appropriate honour, the great obligation which I owe to one part of the Collection — as having been the means of first making us personally known to each other. Upon much of the remainder,

also, you have a peculiar claim,—for several of the best pieces were composed under the shade of your own groves, upon the classic ground of Coleorton; where I was animated by the recollection of those illustrious Poets of your Name and Family, who were born in that neighbourhood; and, we may be assured, did not wander with indifference by the dashing stream of Grace Dieu, and among the rocks that diversify the forest of Charnwood.—Nor is there any one to whom such parts of this Collection as have been inspired or coloured by the beautiful Country from which I now address you, could be presented with more propriety than to yourself—who have composed so many admirable Pictures from the suggestions of the same scenery. Early in life, the sublimity and beauty of this Region excited your admiration; and I know

that you are bound to it in mind by a still-strengthening attachment.

Wishing and hoping that this Work, with the embellishments it has received from your Pencil*, may survive as a lasting memorial of a friendship, which I reckon among the blessings of my life,

I have the honour to be,

My dear Sir George,

Yours most affectionately

and faithfully,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
February 1. 1815.

* The state of the Plates does not allow these to be repeated in the present Edition.

that you are bound to it in mind by a still-
strengthening attachment.
With hope and hope that this World, with
the consolations it has received from your
Pencil, may survive as a lasting memorial
of a friendship, which I reckon among the
blessings of my life.

I have the honor to be
My dear Sir (young)
Yours most affectionately
and faithfully

WILLIAM HONORS

These things were written
February 1. 1815.
to the Hon. Wm. Pitt Rivers
at his residence in London
and to the Hon. Wm. Pitt Rivers
at his residence in London

I have the honor to be
My dear Sir (young)

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Contents of the last Edition in five volumes are compressed into the present of four; with some additional Pieces reprinted from miscellaneous Publications.

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PREFACE.*

THE observations prefixed to that portion of these Volumes which was published many years ago, under the title of "Lyrical Ballads," have so little of a special application to the greater part of the present enlarged and diversified collection, that they could not with propriety stand as an Introduction to it. Not deeming it, however, expedient to suppress that exposition, slight and imperfect as it is, of the feelings which had determined the choice of the subjects, and the principles which had regulated the composition of those Pieces, I have transferred it to the end of the Second Volume†, to be attended to, or not, at the pleasure of the Reader.

* To the Edition published in 1815, in Two Octavo Volumes.

† In *this* Edition placed at the end of the Third Volume.

In the Preface to that part of "The Recluse," lately published under the title of "The Excursion," I have alluded to a meditated arrangement of my minor Poems, which should assist the attentive Reader in perceiving their connection with each other, and also their subordination to that Work. I shall here say a few words explanatory of this arrangement, as carried into effect in the present Volumes.

The powers requisite for the production of poetry are, first, those of observation and description, *i. e.* the ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the Describer: whether the things depicted be actually present to the senses, or have a place only in the memory. This power, though indispensable to a Poet, is one which he employs only in submission to necessity, and never for a continuance of time: as its exercise supposes all the higher qualities of the mind to be passive, and in a state of subjection to external objects, much in the same way as the Translator or Engraver ought to be to his Original. 2dly, Sensibility, — which, the

more exquisite it is, the wider will be the range of a Poet's perceptions; and the more will he be incited to observe objects, both as they exist in themselves and as re-acted upon by his own mind. (The distinction between poetic and human sensibility has been marked in the character of the Poet delineated in the original preface, before-mentioned.) 3dly, Reflection, — which makes the Poet acquainted with the value of actions, images, thoughts, and feelings; and assists the sensibility in perceiving their connection with each other. 4thly, Imagination and Fancy, — to modify, to create, and to associate. 5thly, Invention, — by which characters are composed out of materials supplied by observation; whether of the Poet's own heart and mind, or of external life and nature; and such incidents and situations produced as are most impressive to the imagination, and most fitted to do justice to the characters, sentiments, and passions, which the Poet undertakes to illustrate. And, lastly, Judgment, — to decide how and where, and in what degree, each of these faculties ought to be exerted; so that the less shall not be sacrificed to the greater; nor the greater,

slighting the less, arrogate, to its own injury, more than its due. By judgment, also, is determined what are the laws and appropriate graces of every species of composition.

The materials of Poetry, by these powers collected and produced, are cast, by means of various moulds, into divers forms. The moulds may be enumerated, and the forms specified, in the following order. 1st, the Narrative, — including the Epopœia, the Historic Poem, the Tale, the Romance, the Mock-heroic, and, if the spirit of Homer will tolerate such neighbourhood, that dear production of our days, the metrical Novel. Of this Class, the distinguishing mark is, that the Narrator, however liberally his speaking agents be introduced, is himself the source from which every thing primarily flows. Epic Poets, in order that their mode of composition may accord with the elevation of their subject, represent themselves as *singing* from the inspiration of the Muse, “Arma virumque *cano* ;” but this is a fiction, in modern times, of slight value: the Iliad or the Paradise Lost would gain little in our estimation by being chanted. The other poets who belong to this class are commonly

content to *tell* their tale ; — so that of the whole it may be affirmed that they neither require nor reject the accompaniment of music.

2dly, The Dramatic, — consisting of Tragedy, Historic Drama, Comedy, and Masque, in which the poet does not appear at all in his own person, and where the whole action is carried on by speech and dialogue of the agents ; music being admitted only incidentally and rarely. The Opera may be placed here, inasmuch as it proceeds by dialogue ; though depending, to the degree that it does, upon music, it has a strong claim to be ranked with the Lyrical. The characteristic and impassioned Epistle, of which Ovid and Pope have given examples, considered as a species of monodrama, may, without impropriety, be placed in this class.

3dly, The Lyrical, — containing the Hymn, the Ode, the Elegy, the Song, and the Ballad ; in all which, for the production of their *full* effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable.

4thly, The Idyllium, — descriptive chiefly either of the processes and appearances of external nature, as the Seasons of Thomson ; or of

characters, manners, and sentiments, as are Shenstone's Schoolmistress, The Cotter's Saturday Night of Burns, The Twa Dogs of the same Author; or of these in conjunction with the appearances of Nature, as most of the pieces of Theocritus, the Allegro and Penseroso of Milton, Beattie's Minstrel, Goldsmith's Deserted Village. The Epitaph, the Inscription, the Sonnet, most of the epistles of poets writing in their own persons, and all loco-descriptive poetry, belong to this class.

5thly, Didactic,—the principal object of which is direct instruction; as the Poem of Lucretius, the Georgics of Virgil, The Fleece of Dyer, Mason's "English Garden," &c.

And, lastly, philosophical satire, like that of Horace and Juvenal; personal and occasional Satire rarely comprehending sufficient of the general in the individual to be dignified with the name of poetry.

Out of the three last has been constructed a composite order, of which Young's Night Thoughts, and Cowper's Task, are excellent examples.

It is deducible from the above, that poems,

apparently miscellaneous, may with propriety be arranged either with reference to the powers of mind *predominant* in the production of them; or to the mould in which they are cast; or, lastly, to the subjects to which they relate. From each of these considerations, the following Poems have been divided into classes; which, that the work may more obviously correspond with the course of human life, and for the sake of exhibiting in it the three requisites of a legitimate whole, a beginning, a middle, and an end, have been also arranged, as far as it was possible, according to an order of time, commencing with Childhood, and terminating with Old Age, Death, and Immortality. My guiding wish was, that the small pieces of which these volumes consist, thus discriminated, might be regarded under a two-fold view; as composing an entire work within themselves, and as adjuncts to the philosophical Poem, "The Recluse." This arrangement has long presented itself habitually to my own mind. Nevertheless, I should have preferred to scatter the contents of these volumes at random, if I had been persuaded that, by the plan adopted, any thing material would be taken from

the natural effect of the pieces, individually, on the mind of the unreflecting Reader. I trust there is a sufficient variety in each class to prevent this; while, for him who reads with reflection, the arrangement will serve as a commentary unostentatiously directing his attention to my purposes, both particular and general. But, as I wish to guard against the possibility of misleading by this classification, it is proper first to remind the Reader, that certain poems are placed according to the powers of mind, in the Author's conception, predominant in the production of them; *predominant*, which implies the exertion of other faculties in less degree. Where there is more imagination than fancy in a poem, it is placed under the head of imagination, and *vice versâ*. Both the above classes might without impropriety have been enlarged from that consisting of "Poems founded on the Affections;" as might this latter from those, and from the class "proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection." The most striking characteristics of each piece, mutual illustration, variety, and proportion, have governed me throughout.

It may be proper in this place to state, that

the Extracts in the second Class, entitled "Juvenile Pieces," are in many places altered from the printed copy, chiefly by omission and compression. The slight alterations of another kind were for the most part made not long after the publication of the Poems from which the Extracts are taken.* These Extracts seem to have a title to be placed here, as they were the productions of youth, and represent implicitly some of the features of a youthful mind, at a time when images of nature supplied to it the place of thought, sentiment, and almost of action; or as it will be found expressed, of a state of mind when

—————"the sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms were then to me
An appetite, a feeling, and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye."—

I will own that I was much at a loss what to select of these descriptions; and perhaps it

* These Poems are now printed entire.

would have been better either to have reprinted the whole, or suppressed what I have given.

None of the other Classes, except those of Fancy and Imagination, require any particular notice. But a remark of general application may be made. All Poets, except the dramatic, have been in the practice of feigning that their works were composed to the music of the harp or lyre: with what degree of affectation this has been done in modern times, I leave to the judicious to determine. For my own part, I have not been disposed to violate probability so far, or to make such a large demand upon the Reader's charity. Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical; and, therefore, cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in much the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject. Poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves: the law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible, — the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification, — as to deprive the Reader of a

voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem ; — in the same manner as his mind is left at liberty, and even summoned, to act upon its thoughts and images. But, though the accompaniment of a musical instrument be frequently dispensed with, the true Poet does not therefore abandon his privilege distinct from that of the mere Proseman ;

“ He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.”

I come now to the consideration of the words Fancy and Imagination, as employed in the classification of the following Poems. “ A man,” says an intelligent author, “ has imagination in proportion as he can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense : it is the faculty which *images* within the mind the phenomena of sensation. A man has fancy in proportion as he can call up, connect, or associate, at pleasure, those internal images (*φανταζειν* is to cause to appear) so as to complete ideal representations of absent objects. Imagination is the power of depicting, and fancy of evoking and combining. The imagination is formed by patient observation ; the fancy by a voluntary activity in shift-

ing the scenery of the mind. The more accurate the imagination, the more safely may a painter, or a poet, undertake a delineation, or a description, without the presence of the objects to be characterized. The more versatile the fancy, the more original and striking will be the decorations produced." — *British Synonyms discriminated, by W. Taylor.*

Is not this as if a man should undertake to supply an account of a building, and be so intent upon what he had discovered of the foundation, as to conclude his task without once looking up at the superstructure? Here, as in other instances throughout the volume, the judicious Author's mind is enthralled by Etymology; he takes up the original word as his guide and escort, and too often does not perceive how soon he becomes its prisoner, without liberty to tread in any path but that to which it confines him. It is not easy to find out how imagination, thus explained, differs from distinct remembrance of images; or fancy from quick and vivid recollection of them: each is nothing more than a mode of memory. If the two words bear the above meaning, and no other, what term is left to

designate that Faculty of which the Poet is "all compact;" he whose eye glances from earth to heaven, whose spiritual attributes body forth what his pen is prompt in turning to shape; or what is left to characterise Fancy, as insinuating herself into the heart of objects with creative activity? — Imagination, in the sense of the word as giving title to a Class of the following Poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws. I proceed to illustrate my meaning by instances. A parrot *hangs* from the wires of his cage by his beak or by his claws; or a monkey from the bough of a tree by his paws or his tail. Each creature does so literally and actually. In the first Eclogue of Virgil, the Shepherd, thinking of the time when he is to take leave of his Farm, thus addresses his Goats: —

"Non ego vos posthac viridi projectus in antro
Dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo."

———— "half way down
Hangs one who gathers samphire,"

is the well-known expression of Shakspeare, delineating an ordinary image upon the Cliffs of Dover. In these two instances is a slight exertion of the faculty which I denominate imagination, in the use of one word: neither the goats nor the samphire-gatherer do literally hang, as does the parrot or the monkey; but, presenting to the senses something of such an appearance, the mind in its activity, for its own gratification, contemplates them as hanging.

“As when far off at Sea a Fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the Isles
Of Ternate or Tidore, whence Merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
Ply, stemming nightly toward the Pole: so seemed
Far off the flying Fiend.”

Here is the full strength of the imagination involved in the word *hangs*, and exerted upon the whole image: First, the Fleet, an aggregate of many Ships, is represented as one mighty Person, whose track, we know and feel, is upon the waters; but, taking advantage of its appearance to the senses, the Poet dares to represent it as *hanging in the clouds*, both for the gratification

of the mind in contemplating the image itself, and in reference to the motion and appearance of the sublime objects to which it is compared.

From images of sight we will pass to those of sound :

“ Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove *broods* ; ”
of the same bird,

“ His voice was *buried* among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze ; ”

“ O, Cuckoo ! shall I call thee *Bird*,
Or but a wandering *Voice* ? ”

The Stock-dove is said to *coo*, a sound well imitating the note of the bird ; but, by the intervention of the metaphor *broods*, the affections are called in by the imagination to assist in marking the manner in which the Bird reiterates and prolongs her soft note, as if herself delighting to listen to it, and participating of a still and quiet satisfaction, like that which may be supposed inseparable from the continuous process of incubation. “ His voice was buried among trees,” a metaphor expressing the love of *seclusion* by which this Bird is marked ; and characterising its note as not partaking of the shrill and

the piercing, and therefore more easily deadened by the intervening shade ; yet a note so peculiar and withal so pleasing, that the breeze, gifted with that love of the sound which the Poet feels, penetrates the shade in which it is entombed, and conveys it to the ear of the listener.

“ Shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice ? ”

This concise interrogation characterises the seeming ubiquity of the voice of the Cuckoo, and dispossesses the creature almost of a corporeal existence ; the Imagination being tempted to this exertion of her power by a consciousness in the memory that the Cuckoo is almost perpetually heard throughout the season of Spring, but seldom becomes an object of sight.

Thus far of images independent of each other, and immediately endowed by the mind with properties that do not inhere in them, upon an incitement from properties and qualities the existence of which is inherent and obvious. These processes of imagination are carried on either by conferring additional properties upon an object, or abstracting from it some of those which it actually possesses, and thus enabling it to re-act

upon the mind which hath performed the process, like a new existence.

I pass from the Imagination acting upon an individual image to a consideration of the same faculty employed upon images in a conjunction by which they modify each other. The Reader has already had a fine instance before him in the passage quoted from Virgil, where the apparently perilous situation of the Goat, hanging upon the shaggy precipice, is contrasted with that of the Shepherd, contemplating it from the seclusion of the Cavern in which he lies stretched at ease and in security. Take these images separately, and how unaffected the picture compared with that produced by their being thus connected with, and opposed to, each other!

“As a huge Stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence,
Wonder to all who do the same espy
By what means it could thither come, and whence,
So that it seems a thing endued with sense,
Like a Sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
Of rock or sand repositeth, there to sun himself.

Such seemed this Man; not all alive or dead,
Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age.
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
And moveth altogether if it move at all.”

In these images, the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately and mediately acting, are all brought into conjunction. The Stone is endowed with something of the power of life to approximate it to the Sea-beast; and the Sea-beast stripped of some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the stone; which intermediate image is thus treated for the purpose of bringing the original image, that of the stone, to a nearer resemblance to the figure and condition of the aged Man; who is divested of so much of the indications of life and motion as to bring him to the point where the two objects unite and coalesce in just comparison. After what has been said, the image of the Cloud need not be commented upon.

Thus far of an endowing or modifying power: but the Imagination also shapes and *creates*; and how? By innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number,—alternations proceeding from, and governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers. Recur to the passage

already cited from Milton. When the compact Fleet, as one Person, has been introduced “Sailing from Bengala,” “They,” *i. e.* the “Merchants,” representing the Fleet, resolved into a Multitude of Ships, “ply” their voyage towards the extremities of the earth: “So” (referring to the word “As” in the commencement) “seemed the flying Fiend;” the image of his Person acting to recombine the multitude of Ships into one body, — the point from which the comparison set out. “So seemed,” and to whom seemed? To the heavenly Muse who dictates the poem, to the eye of the Poet’s mind, and to that of the Reader, present at one moment in the wide Ethiopian, and the next in the solitudes, then first broken in upon, of the infernal regions!

“Modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.”

Hear again this mighty Poet, — speaking of the Messiah going forth to expel from Heaven the rebellious Angels,

“Attended by ten thousand thousand Saints

He onward came: far off his coming shone,” —

the retinue of Saints, and the Person of the Messiah himself, lost almost and merged in the

splendour of that indefinite abstract on, "His coming!"

As I do not mean here to treat this subject further than to throw some light upon the present Volumes, and especially upon one division of them, I shall spare myself and the Reader the trouble of considering the Imagination as it deals with thoughts and sentiments, as it regulates the composition of characters, and determines the course of actions: I will not consider it (more than I have already done by implication) as that power which, in the language of one of my most esteemed Friends, "draws all things to one; which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessaries, take one colour and serve to one effect." * The grand store-houses of enthusiastic and meditative Imagination, of poetical, as contradistinguished from human and dramatic Imagination, are the prophetic and lyrical parts of the Holy Scriptures, and the works of Milton, to which I cannot forbear to add those of Spenser. I select these writers in preference to those of ancient Greece and Rome, because the

* Charles Lamb upon the genius of Hogarth.

anthropomorphitism of the Pagan religion subjected the minds of the greatest poets in those countries too much to the bondage of definite form; from which the Hebrews were preserved by their abhorrence of idolatry. This abhorrence was almost as strong in our great epic Poet, both from circumstances of his life, and from the constitution of his mind. However imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul; and all things tended in him towards the sublime. Spenser, of a gentler nature, maintained his freedom by aid of his allegorical spirit, at one time inciting him to create persons out of abstractions; and, at another, by a superior effort of genius, to give the universality and permanence of abstractions to his human beings, by means of attributes and emblems that belong to the highest moral truths and the purest sensations, — of which his character of Una is a glorious example. Of the human and dramatic Imagination the works of Shakspeare are an inexhaustible source.

“ I tax not you, ye Elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you Kingdoms, called you Daughters ! ”

And if, bearing in mind the many Poets distin-

guished by this prime quality, whose names I omit to mention; yet justified by a recollection of the insults which the Ignorant, the Incapable and the Presumptuous, have heaped upon these and my other writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself; I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me) that I have given, in these unfavourable times, evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of Man, his natural affections, and his acquired passions; which have the same ennobling tendency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance.

This subject may be dismissed with observing — that, in the series of Poems placed under the head of Imagination, I have begun with one of the earliest processes of Nature in the developement of this faculty. Guided by one of my own primary consciousnesses, I have represented a commutation and transfer of internal feelings, co-operating with external accidents, to plant, for immortality, images of sound and sight, in

the celestial soil of the Imagination. The Boy, there introduced, is listening, with something of a feverish and restless anxiety, for the recurrence of the riotous sounds which he had previously excited; and, at the moment when the intenseness of his mind is beginning to remit, he is surprised into a perception of the solemn and tranquillizing images which the Poem describes. — The Poems next in succession exhibit the faculty exerting itself upon various objects of the external universe; then follow others, where it is employed upon feelings, characters, and actions*; and the Class is concluded with imaginative pictures of moral, political, and religious sentiments.

To the mode in which Fancy has already been characterised as the Power of evoking and combining, or, as my friend Mr. Coleridge has styled it, “the aggregative and associative Power,” my objection is only that the definition is too general. To aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to the Imagination as to the Fancy; but either the ma-

* In the present edition, such of these as were furnished by Scottish subjects are incorporated with a class entitled, Memorials of Tours in Scotland.

terials evoked and combined are different ; or they are brought together under a different law, and for a different purpose. Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution, from her touch ; and, where they admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent. Directly the reverse of these, are the desires and demands of the Imagination. She recoils from every thing but the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite. She leaves it to Fancy to describe Queen Mab as coming,

“ In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an Alderman.”

Having to speak of stature, she does not tell you that her gigantic Angel was as tall as Pompey's Pillar ; much less that he was twelve cubits, or twelve hundred cubits high ; or that his dimensions equalled those of Teneriffe or Atlas ; — because these, and if they were a million times as high, it would be the same, are bounded : The expression is, “ His stature reached the sky ! ” the illimitable firmament ! — When the Imagination frames a comparison, if

it does not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows — and continues to grow — upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature, than upon expression and effect; less upon casual and outstanding, than upon inherent and internal, properties: — moreover, the images invariably modify each other. — The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appositely produced or fortunately combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value: or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities. If she can win you over to her purpose, and impart to you her feelings, she cares not how unstable or transitory may be her influence, knowing that it will not

be out of her power to resume it upon an apt occasion. But the Imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion; — the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur; but, if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished. — Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our Nature, Imagination to incite and to support the eternal. — Yet is it not the less true that Fancy, as she is an active, is also, under her own laws and in her own spirit, a creative faculty. In what manner Fancy ambitiously aims at a rivalry with the Imagination, and Imagination stoops to work with the materials of Fancy, might be illustrated from the compositions of all eloquent writers, whether in prose or verse; and chiefly from those of our own Country. Scarcely a page of the impassioned parts of Bishop Taylor's Works can be opened that shall not afford examples. — Referring the Reader to those inestimable Volumes, I will content myself with placing a conceit (ascribed to Lord Chesterfield) in contrast with a passage from the *Paradise Lost*:—

“ The dews of the evening most carefully shun,
They are the tears of the sky for the loss of the Sun.”

After the transgression of Adam, Milton, with other appearances of sympathising Nature, thus marks the immediate consequence,

“ Sky lowered, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completion of the mortal sin.”

The associating link is the same in each instance ; — dew or rain, not distinguishable from the liquid substance of tears, are employed as indications of sorrow. A flash of surprise is the effect in the former case ; a flash of surprise, and nothing more ; for the nature of things does not sustain the combination. In the latter, the effects of the act, of which there is this immediate consequence and visible sign, are so momentous, that the mind acknowledges the justice and reasonableness of the sympathy in Nature so manifested ; and the sky weeps drops of water as if with human eyes, as “ Earth had before, trembled from her entrails, and Nature given a second groan.”

Awe-stricken as I am by contemplating the operations of the mind of this truly divine Poet, I scarcely dare venture to add that “ An Address

to an Infant," which the reader will find under the Class of Fancy in the present Volumes, exhibits something of this communion and interchange of instruments and functions between the two powers ; and is, accordingly, placed last in the class, as a preparation for that of Imagination which follows.

Finally, I will refer to Cotton's "Ode upon Winter," an admirable composition, though stained with some peculiarities of the age in which he lived, for a general illustration of the characteristics of Fancy. The middle part of this ode contains a most lively description of the entrance of Winter, with his retinue, as "A palsied King," and yet a military Monarch, — advancing for conquest with his Army ; the several bodies of which, and their arms and equipments, are described with a rapidity of detail, and a profusion of *fanciful* comparisons, which indicate on the part of the Poet extreme activity of intellect, and a correspondent hurry of delightful feeling. Winter retires from the Foe into his fortress, where

——— “ a magazine
 Of sovereign juice is cellared in ;
 Liquor that will the siege maintain
 Should Phœbus ne'er return again.”

Though myself a water-drinker, I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing what follows, as an instance still more happy of Fancy employed in the treatment of feeling than, in its preceding passages, the Poem supplies of her management of forms.

“ 'Tis that, that gives the Poet rage,
 And thaws the gelly'd blood of Age ;
 Matures the Young, restores the Old,
 And makes the fainting Coward bold.

It lays the careful head to rest,
 Calms palpitations in the breast,
 Renders our lives' misfortune sweet ;

* * * * *

Then let the chill Sirocco blow,
 And gird us round with hills of snow,
 Or else go whistle to the shore,
 And make the hollow mountains roar,

Whilst we together jovial sit
 Careless, and crowned with mirth and wit,
 Where, though bleak winds confine us home,
 Our fancies round the world shall roam.

We'll think of all the Friends we know,
And drink to all worth drinking to ;
When having drunk all thine and mine,
We rather shall want healths than wine.

But where Friends fail us, we'll supply
Our friendships with our charity ;
Men that remote in sorrows live,
Shall by our lusty Brimmers thrive.

We'll drink the wanting into Wealth,
And those that languish into health,
The Afflicted into joy ; th' Opprest
Into security and rest.

The Worthy in disgrace shall find
Favour return again more kind,
And in restraint who stifled lie,
Shall taste the air of liberty.

The Brave shall triumph in success,
The Lovers shall have Mistresses,
Poor unregarded Virtue, praise,
And the neglected Poet, Bays.

Thus shall our healths do others good,
Whilst we ourselves do all we would ;
For, freed from envy and from care,
What would we be but what we are ? ”

It remains that I should express my regret
at the necessity of separating my compositions

from some beautiful Poems of Mr. Coleridge, with which they have been long associated in publication. The feelings with which that joint publication was made, have been gratified; its end is answered; and the time is come when considerations of general propriety dictate the separation. Three short pieces (now first published) are the work of a Female Friend; and the Reader, to whom they may be acceptable, is indebted to me for his pleasure; if any one regard them with dislike, or be disposed to condemn them, let the censure fall upon him who, trusting in his own sense of their merit and their fitness for the place which they occupy, *extorted* them from the Authoress.

When I sate down to write this preface, it was my intention to have made it more comprehensive; but as all that I deem necessary is expressed, I will here detain the reader no longer: — what I have further to remark shall be introduced by way of interlude, in some other part of these Volumes.*

* See the end of this Volume.

from some standard source of authority, with which they have been associated in publication. The objects which have been granted in publication was made have been granted in and is enlarged, and the time is coming when consideration of general principles, distinct from the separation. These three points (now first put forward) are the work of a liberal friend, and the reader, to whom they may be acceptable, is indebted to me for his pleasure; if any one regard them with dislike, or be disposed to condemn them, let the censure fall upon him who, trusting in his own sense of right, took and took place for the place which they occupy, and not from the authorities.

When I set down to write this preface, it was my intention to have made it more comprehensive; but as all that I then intended is expressed, I will have done the better no longer: — what I have further to remark shall be introduced by way of introduction, in some other part of these volumes.

* The name of the volume is "The History of the English Language," and it is intended to be published in three volumes.

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ERRATA IN VOL. I.

Page 47. line 13. for "linger" read "lingerer."

62. line 15. for "the" read "a."

242. line 5. from bottom, for "bosom is drest," read
"wings in crimson are drest."

242. line 4. from bottom, for "In" read "A."

... with a black ...
... of the ...
... with a black ...
... of a black ...
... of the ...
... to be found in ...
... with a ...
... with a ...
... with a ...

ERRATA IN VOL. I.

- Page 47. line 18. for "finger" read "finger."
- Page 47. line 18. for "the" read "a."
- Page 47. line 18. from bottom, for "bottom is clear" read "wings in crimson are clear."
- Page 47. line 18. from bottom, for "a" read "A."

POEMS

REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD.

FORMS

RELATING TO THE REED OF CHILDREN

I.

My heart leaps up when I behold
A Rainbow in the sky :
So was it when my life began ;
So is it now I am a Man ;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die !
The Child is Father of the Man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

II.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

STAY near me — do not take thy flight !
A little longer stay in sight !
Much converse do I find in Thee,
Historian of my Infancy !

Float near me ; do not yet depart !
Dead times revive in thee :
Thou bringest, gay Creature as thou art !
A solemn image to my heart,
My Father's Family !

Oh ! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
 The time, when, in our childish plays,
 My Sister Emmeline and I
 Together chased the Butterfly !
 A very hunter did I rush
 Upon the prey : — with leaps and springs
 I followed on from brake to bush ;
 But she, God love her ! feared to brush
 The dust from off its wings.

 III.

FORESIGHT,

OR THE CHARGE OF A CHILD TO HIS YOUNGER
 COMPANION.

THAT is work of waste and ruin —
 Do as Charles and I are doing !
 Strawberry-blossoms, one and all,
 We must spare them — here are many :
 Look at it — the Flower is small,
 Small and low, though fair as any :
 Do not touch it ! summers two
 I am older, Anne, than you.

Pull the Primrose, Sister Anne !
 Pull as many as you can.
 — Here are Daisies, take your fill ;
 Pansies, and the Cuckow-flower :
 Of the lofty Daffodil
 Make your bed, and make your bower ;
 Fill your lap, and fill your bosom ;
 Only spare the Strawberry-blossom !

Primroses, the Spring may love them —
 Summer knows but little of them :
 Violets, a barren kind,
 Withered on the ground must lie;
 Daisies leave no fruit behind
 When the pretty flowerets die;
 Pluck them, and another year
 As many will be blowing here.

God has given a kindlier power
 To the favoured Strawberry-flower.
 When the months of Spring are fled
 Hither let us bend our walk;
 Lurking berries, ripe and red,
 Then will hang on every stalk,
 Each within its leafy bower;
 And for that promise spare the flower !

 IV.

CHARACTERISTICS

OF A CHILD THREE YEARS OLD.

LOVING she is, and tractable, though wild;
 And Innocence hath privilege in her
 To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes;
 And feats of cunning ; and the pretty round
 Of trespasses, affected to provoke
 Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
 And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth,
 Not less if unattended and alone

Than when both young and old sit gathered round
 And take delight in its activity,
 Even so this happy Creature of herself
 Is all-sufficient ; solitude to her
 Is blithe society, who fills the air
 With gladness and involuntary songs.
 Light are her sallies as the tripping Fawn's
 Forth-startled from the fern where she lay couched ;
 Unthought-of, unexpected, as the stir
 Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow flowers ;
 Or from before it chasing wantonly
 The many-coloured images impressed
 Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

 V.

ADDRESS TO A CHILD,

DURING A BOISTEROUS WINTER EVENING.

By a female Friend of the Author.

WHAT way does the Wind come? What way does he go?
 He rides over the water, and over the snow,
 Through wood, and through vale ; and o'er rocky height,
 Which the goat cannot climb, takes his sounding flight ;
 He tosses about in every bare tree,
 As, if you look up, you plainly may see ;
 But how he will come, and whither he goes
 There's never a Scholar in England knows.

He will suddenly stop in a cunning nook,
 And rings a sharp 'larum ; — but, if you should look,
 There's nothing to see but a cushion of snow

Round as a pillow, and whiter than milk,
And softer than if it were cover'd with silk.
Sometimes he'll hide in the cave of a rock,
Then whistle as shrill as the buzzard cock ;
— Yet seek him, — and what shall you find in the place?
Nothing but silence and empty space ;
Save, in a corner, a heap of dry leaves,
That he's left, for a bed, to beggars or thieves !

As soon as 'tis daylight, to-morrow, with me
You shall go to the orchard, and then you will see
That he has been there, and made a great rout,
And cracked the branches, and strewn them about ;
Heaven grant that he spare but that one upright twig
That looked up at the sky so proud and big
All last summer, as well you know,
Studded with apples, a beautiful show !

Hark ! over the roof he makes a pause,
And growls as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge rattle
Drive them down, like men in a battle :
— But let him range round ; he does us no harm,
We build up the fire, we're snug and warm ;
Untouched by his breath see the candle shines bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light ;
Books have we to read, — but that half-stifled knell,
Alas ! 'tis the sound of the eight o'clock bell.
— Come now we'll to bed ! and when we are there
He may work his own will, and what shall we care ?
He may knock at the door, — we'll not let him in ;
May drive at the windows, — we'll laugh at his din ;
Let him seek his own home wherever it be ;
Here's a *cozie* warm house for Edward and me.

VI.

THE MOTHER'S RETURN.

By the same.

A MONTH, sweet Little-ones, is passed
Since your dear Mother went away, —
And she to-morrow will return ;
To-morrow is the happy day.

O blessed tidings ! thought of joy !
The eldest heard with steady glee ;
Silent he stood ; then laughed amain, —
And shouted, “ Mother, come to me ! ”

Louder and louder did he shout,
With witless hope to bring her near ;
“ Nay, patience ! patience, little boy !
Your tender mother cannot hear.”

I told of hills, and far-off towns,
And long, long vales to travel through ; —
He listens, puzzled, sore perplexed,
But he submits ; what can he do ?

No strife disturbs his Sister's breast ;
She wars not with the mystery
Of time and distance, night and day,
The bonds of our humanity.

Her joy is like an instinct, joy
Of kitten, bird, or summer fly ;
She dances, runs without an aim,
She chatters in her ecstasy.

Her Brother now takes up the note,
And echoes back his Sister's glee ;
They hug the Infant in my arms,
As if to force his sympathy.

Then, settling into fond discourse,
We rested in the garden bower ;
While sweetly shone the evening sun
In his departing hour.

We told o'er all that we had done,—
Our rambles by the swift brook's side
Far as the willow-skirted pool,
Where two fair swans together glide.

We talked of change, of winter gone,
Of green leaves on the hawthorn spray,
Of birds that build their nests and sing,
And "all since Mother went away!"

To her these tales they will repeat,
To her our new-born tribes will show,
The goslings green, the ass's colt,
The lambs that in the meadow go.

— But, see, the evening Star comes forth !
To bed the Children must depart ;
A moment's heaviness they feel,
A sadness at the heart :

'Tis gone — and in a merry fit
They run up stairs in gamesome race ;
I, too, infected by their mood,
I could have joined the wanton chase.

Five minutes past — and, O the change !
Asleep upon their beds they lie ;
Their busy limbs in perfect rest,
And closed the sparkling eye.

VII.

LUCY GRAY ;

OR, SOLITUDE.

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray :
And, when I crossed the Wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary Child.

No Mate, no comrade Lucy knew ;
She dwelt on a wide Moor,
— The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door !

You yet may spy the Fawn at play,
The Hare upon the Green ;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

“ To-night will be a stormy night —
You to the Town must go ;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow.”

“ That, Father ! will I gladly do :
'Tis scarcely afternoon —
The Minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the Moon.”

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band ;
He plied his work ; — and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe :
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time :
She wandered up and down ;
And many a hill did Lucy climb ;
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide ;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the Moor ;
And thence they saw the Bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept — and, turning homeward, cried,
“ In Heaven we all shall meet : ”
— When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Half breathless from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small ;
And through the broken hawthorn-hedge,
And by the long stone-wall ;

And then an open field they crossed :
The marks were still the same ;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost ;
And to the Bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank ;
And further there were none !

— Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living Child ;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome Wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind ;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

VIII.

WE ARE SEVEN.

— A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death ?

I met a little cottage Girl :
She was eight years old, she said ;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
— Her beauty made me glad.

“ Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?”
“ How many? Seven in all,” she said,
And wondering looked at me.

“ And where are they? I pray you tell,”
She answered, “ Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.”

“ You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! — I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be.”

Then did the little Maid reply,
“ Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree.”

“ You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five.”

“ Their graves are green, they may be seen,”
The little Maid replied,
“ Twelve steps or more from my mother’s door,
And they are side by side.

My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem ;
And there upon the ground I sit —
I sit and sing to them.

And often after sun-set, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

The first that died was little Jane ;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain ;
And then she went away.

So in the church-yard she was laid ;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side.”

“ How many are you, then,” said I,
“ If they two are in Heaven ?”
The little Maiden did reply,
“ O Master ! we are seven.”

“ But they are dead ; those two are dead !
Their spirits are in Heaven ! ”
’Twas throwing words away : for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, “ Nay, we are seven ! ”

IX.

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS,

SHOWING HOW THE PRACTICE OF LYING MAY BE
TAUGHT.

I HAVE a boy of five years old ;
His face is fair and fresh to see ;
His limbs are cast in beauty’s mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran ;
I thought of Kilve’s delightful shore,
Our pleasant home when Spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
Some fond regrets to entertain ;
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
From sunshine back to shade.

Birds warbled round me — every trace
Of inward sadness had its charm ;
“ Kilve,” said I, “ was a favoured place,
And so is Liswyn farm.”

My boy was by my side, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress !
And, as we talked, I questioned him,
In very idleness.

“ Now tell me, had you rather be,”
I said, and took him by the arm,
“ On Kilve’s smooth shore, by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm ? ”

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, “ At Kilve I’d rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm.”

“ Now, little Edward, say why so ;
My little Edward, tell me why.” —
“ I cannot tell, I do not know.” —
“ Why, this is strange,” said I ;

“ For, here are woods, and green-hills warm :
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea.”

At this, my Boy hung down his head,
He blushed with shame, nor made reply;
And five times to the Child I said,
“Why, Edward, tell me why?”

His head he raised — there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain —
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded Vane.

Then did the Boy his tongue unlock;
And thus to me he made reply:
“At Kilve there was no weather-cock,
And that’s the reason why.”

O dearest, dearest Boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

X.

RURAL ARCHITECTURE.

THERE’S George Fisher, Charles Fleming, and Reginald Shore,
Three rosy-cheeked School-boys, the highest not more
Than the height of a Counsellor’s bag;
To the top of GREAT How did it please them to climb:
And there they built up, without mortar or lime,
A Man on the peak of the crag.

They built him of stones gathered up as they lay :
They built him and christened him all in one day,
An Urchin both vigorous and hale ;
And so without scruple they called him Ralph Jones.
Now Ralph is renowned for the length of his bones ;
The Magog of Legberthwaite dale.

Just half a week after, the wind sallied forth,
And, in anger or merriment, out of the North,
Coming on with a terrible pother,
From the peak of the crag blew the Giant away.
And what did these School-boys ? — The very next day
They went and they built up another.

— Some little I've seen of blind boisterous works
By Christian Disturbers more savage than Turks,
Spirits busy to do and undo :
At remembrance whereof my blood sometimes will flag ;
Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the crag ;
And I'll build up a Giant with you.

GREAT HOW is a single and conspicuous hill, which rises towards the foot of Thirlmere, on the western side of the beautiful dale of Legberthwaite, along the high road between Keswick and Ambleside.

XI.

THE PET-LAMB.

A PASTORAL.

THE dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink ;
I heard a voice ; it said, “ Drink, pretty Creature, drink ! ”
And, looking o’er the hedge, before me I espied
A snow-white mountain Lamb with a Maiden at its side.

No other sheep were near, the Lamb was all alone,
And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone ;
With one knee on the grass did the little Maiden kneel,
While to that Mountain Lamb she gave its evening meal.

The Lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper took,
Seemed to feast with head and ears ; and his tail with pleasure shook.

“ Drink, pretty Creature, drink,” she said in such a tone
That I almost received her heart into my own.

’Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a Child of beauty rare !
I watched them with delight, they were a lovely pair.
Now with her empty Can the Maiden turned away :
But ere ten yards were gone her footsteps did she stay.

Towards the Lamb she looked ; and from that shady place
I unobserved could see the workings of her face :
If Nature to her tongue could measured numbers bring,
Thus, thought I, to her Lamb that little Maid might sing :

“What ails thee, Young One? what? Why pull so at thy cord?
Is it not well with thee? well both for bed and board?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass as can be;
Rest, little Young One, rest; what is't that aileth thee?

“What is it thou wouldst seek? What is wanting to thy heart?
Thy limbs are they not strong? And beautiful thou art:
This grass is tender grass; these flowers they have no peers;
And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears!

“If the Sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy woollen chain,
This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst gain;
For rain and mountain storms! the like thou needest not fear —
The rain and storm are things that scarcely can come here.

“Rest, little Young One, rest; thou hast forgot the day
When my Father found thee first in places far away;
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned by none,
And thy mother from thy side for evermore was gone.

“He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee home:
A blessed day for thee! then whither wouldst thou roam?
A faithful Nurse thou hast; the dam that did thee yearn
Upon the mountain tops no kinder could have been.

“Thou knowest that twice a day I have brought thee in this Can
Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran;
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is and new.

“Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they are now,
Then I'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the plough;
My Playmate thou shalt be; and when the wind is cold
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be thy fold.

“ It will not, will not rest ! — Poor Creature, can it be
That 'tis thy mother's heart which is working so in thee ?
Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see nor hear.

“ Alas, the mountain tops that look so green and fair !
I've heard of fearful winds and darkness that come there ;
The little brooks that seem all pastime and all play,
When they are angry, roar like Lions for their prey.

“ Here thou needest not dread the raven in the sky ;
Night and day thou art safe, — our cottage is hard by.
Why bleat so after me ? Why pull so at thy chain ?
Sleep — and at break of day I will come to thee again ! ”

— As homeward through the lane I went with lazy feet,
This song to myself did I oftentimes repeat ;
And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad line by line,
That but half of it was hers, and one half of it was *mine*.

Again, and once again, did I repeat the song ;
“ Nay,” said I, “ more than half to the *Damsel* must belong,
For she looked with such a look, and she spake with such a tone,
That I almost received her heart into my own.”

XII.

THE IDLE SHEPHERD-BOYS ;

OR, DUNGEON-GHYLL FORCE.*

A PASTORAL.

I.

THE valley rings with mirth and joy ;
Among the hills the echoes play
A never, never ending song,
To welcome in the May.
The Magpie chatters with delight ;
The mountain Raven's youngling brood
Have left the Mother and the Nest ;
And they go rambling east and west
In search of their own food ;
Or through the glittering Vapours dart
In very wantonness of heart.

II.

Beneath a rock, upon the grass,
Two Boys are sitting in the sun ;
Boys that have had no work to do,
Or work that now is done.
On pipes of sycamore they play
The fragments of a Christmas Hymn ;
Or with that plant which in our dale
We call Stag-horn, or Fox's Tail,
Their rusty Hats they trim :

* *Ghyll*, in the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland, is a short, and, for the most part, a steep narrow valley, with a stream running through it. *Force* is the word universally employed in these dialects for Waterfall.

And thus, as happy as the Day,
Those Shepherds wear the time away.

III.

Along the river's stony marge
The Sand-lark chants a joyous song ;
The Thrush is busy in the wood,
And carols loud and strong.
A thousand Lambs are on the rocks,
All newly born ! both earth and sky
Keep jubilee, and more than all,
Those Boys with their green Coronal ;
They never hear the cry,
That plaintive cry ! which up the hill
Comes from the depth of Dungeon-Ghyll.

IV.

Said Walter, leaping from the ground
“ Down to the stump of yon old yew
We'll for our Whistles run a race.”
—— Away the Shepherds flew
They leapt — they ran — and when they came
Right opposite to Dungeon-Ghyll,
Seeing that he should lose the prize,
“ Stop !” to his comrade Walter cries —
He stopped with no good will :
Said Walter then, “ Your task is here,
'Twill baffle you for half a year.

V.

“ Cross, if you dare, where I shall cross —
Come on, and in my footsteps tread !”
The other took him at his word,
And followed as he led.

It was a spot which you may see
If ever you to Langdale go;
Into a chasm a mighty Block
Hath fallen, and made a Bridge of rock:
The gulf is deep below;
And in a basin black and small
Receives a lofty Waterfall.

VI.

With staff in hand across the cleft
The Challenger pursued his march;
And now, all eyes and feet, hath gained
The middle of the arch.
When list! he hears a piteous moan —
Again! — his heart within him dies —
His pulse is stopped, his breath is lost,
He totters, pallid as a ghost,
And, looking down, espies
A Lamb, that in the pool is pent
Within that black and frightful Rent.

VII.

The Lamb had slipped into the stream,
And safe without a bruise or wound
The Cataract had borne him down
Into the gulf profound.
His Dam had seen him when he fell,
She saw him down the torrent borne;
And, while with all a mother's love
She from the lofty rocks above
Sent forth a cry forlorn,
The Lamb, still swimming round and round,
Made answer to that plaintive sound.

VIII.

When he had learnt what thing it was,
That sent this rueful cry; I ween
The Boy recovered heart, and told
The sight which he had seen.
Both gladly now deferred their task;
Nor was there wanting other aid —
A Poet, one who loves the brooks
Far better than the sages' books,
By chance had thither strayed;
And there the helpless Lamb he found
By those huge rocks encompassed round.

IX.

He drew it gently from the pool,
And brought it forth into the light:
The Shepherds met him with his charge,
An unexpected sight!
Into their arms the Lamb they took,
Said they, "He's neither maimed nor scarred."
Then up the steep ascent they hied,
And placed him at his Mother's side;
And gently did the Bard
Those idle Shepherd-boys upbraid,
And bade them better mind their trade.

XIII.

To H. C.

SIX YEARS OLD.

O THOU! whose fancies from afar are brought;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,

And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol ;
Thou faery Voyager ! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy Boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream ;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery ;
O blessed Vision ! happy Child !
That art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality ;
And Grief, uneasy Lover ! never rest
But when she sate within the touch of thee.
O too industrious folly !
O vain and causeless melancholy !
Nature will either end thee quite ;
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young Lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
What hast Thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow ?
Thou art a Dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks ;
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth ;
A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives ;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

XIV.

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN
BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH.

From an unpublished Poem.

(This extract is reprinted from "THE FRIEND.")

WISDOM and Spirit of the Universe !
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought !
And givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion ! not in vain,
By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul ;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man, —
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature ; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear, — until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome ; among woods
At noon ; and mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling Lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, I homeward went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine :
'Twas mine among the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons : — happy time
It was indeed for all of us ; for me
It was a time of rapture ! — Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six — I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. — All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the Chase
And woodland pleasures, — the resounding horn,
The Pack loud-bellowing, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle : with the din
Meanwhile the precipices rang aloud ;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron ; while the distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, — or sportively
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a Star,
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain : and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
I gave I, reclining back upon my heels,

Stopped short ; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me — even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round !
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

XV.

THE LONGEST DAY.

ADDRESSED TO —.

LET us quit the leafy Arbour,
And the torrent murmuring by :
Sol has dropped into his harbour,
Weary of the open sky.

Evening now unbinds the fetters
Fashioned by the glowing light ;
All that breathe are thankful debtors
To the harbinger of night.

Yet by some grave thoughts attended
Eve renews her calm career ;
For the day that now is ended,
Is the Longest of the Year.

Laura ! sport, as now thou sportest,
On this platform, light and free ;
Take thy bliss, while longest, shortest,
Are indifferent to thee !

Who would check the happy feeling
That inspires the linnet's song?
Who would stop the swallow, wheeling
On her pinions swift and strong?

Yet at this impressive season,
Words which tenderness can speak
From the truths of homely reason,
Might exalt the loveliest cheek;

And, while shades to shades succeeding
Steal the landscape from the sight,
I would urge this moral pleading,
Last forerunner of "Good night!"

SUMMER ebbs; — each day that follows
Is a reflux from on high,
Tending to the darksome hollows
Where the frosts of winter lie.

He who governs the creation,
In His providence, assigned
Such a gradual declination
To the life of human kind.

Yet we mark it not; — fruits redden,
Fresh flowers blow, as flowers have blown,
And the heart is loth to deaden
Hopes that she so long hath known.

Be thou wiser, youthful Maiden!
And when thy decline shall come,
Let not flowers, or boughs fruit-laden,
Hide the knowledge of thy doom.

Now, even now, ere wrapped in slumber,
Fix thine eyes upon the sea
That absorbs time, space, and number;
Look towards Eternity!

Follow thou the flowing River
On whose breast are thither borne
All Deceived, and each Deceiver,
Through the gates of night and morn;

Through the year's successive portals;
Through the bounds which many a star
Marks, not mindless of frail mortals,
When his light returns from far.

Thus when Thou with Time hast travelled
Toward the mighty gulf of things,
And the mazy Stream unravelled
With thy best imaginings;

Think, if thou on beauty leanest,
Think how pitiful that Stay,
Did not virtue give the meanest
Charms superior to decay.

Duty, like a strict preceptor,
Sometimes frowns, or seems to frown;
Choose her thistle for thy sceptre,
While thy brow youth's roses crown.

Grasp it, — if thou shrink and tremble,
Fairest Damsel of the green,
Thou wilt lack the only symbol
That proclaims a genuine Queen;

And ensures those palms of honour
Which selected spirits wear,
Bending low before the Donor,
Lord of Heaven's unchanging Year!

JUVENILE PIECES.

Of the Poems in this class, "THE EVENING WALK" and "DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES" were first published in 1793. They are reprinted with some unimportant alterations that were chiefly made very soon after their publication. It would have been easy to amend them, in many passages, both as to sentiment and expression, and I have not been altogether able to resist the temptation : but attempts of this kind are made at the risk of injuring those characteristic features, which, after all, will be regarded as the principal recommendation of juvenile poems.

I.

EXTRACT

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM, COMPOSED UPON
LEAVING SCHOOL.

DEAR native Regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,
That, wheresoe'er my steps may tend,
And whensoe'er my course shall end,
If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you.

Thus, from the precincts of the West,
The Sun, when sinking down to rest,
Though his departing radiance fail
To illuminate the hollow Vale,
A lingering lustre fondly throws
On the dear mountain-tops where first he rose.

II.

AN EVENING WALK,

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

General Sketch of the Lakes — Author's Regret of his Youth passed amongst them — Short Description of Noon — Cascade Scene — Noon-tide Retreat — Precipice and sloping Lights — Face of Nature as the Sun declines — Mountain Farm, and the Cock — Slate Quarry — Sunset — Superstition of the Country, connected with that Moment — Swans — Female Beggar — Twilight Sounds — Western Lights — Spirits — Night — Moonlight — Hope — Night Sounds — Conclusion.

FAR from my dearest Friend, 'tis mine to rove
Through bare grey dell, high wood, and pastoral cove ;
Where Derwent stops his course to hear the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore ;
Where silver rocks the savage prospect cheer
Of giant yews that frown on Rydal's mere ;
Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedgerows, and to emerald meads ;
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottaged grounds,
Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds ;
Where, deep embosomed, shy* Winander peeps
'Mid clustering isles, and holly-sprinkled steeps ;
Where twilight glens endear my Esthwaite's shore,
And memory of departed pleasures, more.

Fair scenes ! with other eyes, than once, I gaze
Upon the varying charm your round displays,

* These lines are only applicable to the middle part of that lake.

Than when, erewhile, I taught, "a happy child,"
The echoes of your rocks my carols wild :
Then did no ebb of cheerfulness demand
Sad tides of joy from Melancholy's hand ;
In youth's keen eye the livelong day was bright,
The sun at morning, and the stars of night,
Alike, when heard the bittern's hollow bill,
Or the first woodcocks* roamed the moonlight hill.

In thoughtless gaiety I coursed the plain,
And hope itself was all I knew of pain.
For then, even then, the little heart would beat
At times, while young Content forsook her seat,
And wild Impatience, panting upward, showed
Where, tipped with gold, the mountain-summits glowed.
Alas ! the idle tale of man is found
Depicted in the dial's moral round ;
With Hope Reflection blends her social rays
To gild the total tablet of his days ;
Yet still, the sport of some malignant Power,
He knows but from its shade the present hour.

But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle pain ?
To show what pleasures yet to me remain,
Say, will my Friend, with unreluctant ear,
The history of a poet's evening hear ?

When, in the south, the wan noon, brooding still,
Breathed a pale steam around the glaring hill,
And shades of deep-embattled clouds were seen,
Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between ;

* In the beginning of winter, these mountains are frequented by woodcocks, which in dark nights retire into the woods.

When, at the barren wall's unsheltered end,
 Where long rails far into the lake extend,
 Crowded the shortened herds, and beat the tides
 With their quick tails, and lashed their speckled sides ;
 When school-boys stretched their length upon the green ;
 And round the humming elm, a glimmering scene !
 In the brown park, in herds, the troubled deer
 Shook the still-twinkling tail and glancing ear ;
 When horses in the sunburnt intake* stood,
 And vainly eyed below the tempting flood,
 Or tracked the Passenger, in mute distress,
 With forward neck the closing gate to press —
 Then, while I wandered up the huddling rill
 Brightening with water-breaks the sombrous ghyll†,
 As by enchantment, an obscure retreat
 Opened at once, and stayed my devious feet.
 While thick above the rill the branches close,
 In rocky basin its wild waves repose,
 Inverted shrubs, and moss of gloomy green,
 Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between ;
 Save that aloft the subtle sunbeams shine
 On withered briars that o'er the crags recline,
 Sole light admitted here, a small cascade,
 Illumes with sparkling foam the impervious shade ;
 Beyond, along the vista of the brook,
 Where antique roots its bustling course o'erlook,
 The eye reposes on a secret bridge‡
 Half grey, half shagged with ivy to its ridge ;

* The word *intake* is local, and signifies a mountain inclosure.

† Ghyll is also, I believe, a term confined to this country : Glen, ghyll, and dingle, have the same meaning.

‡ The reader who has made the tour of this country : will recognise, in this description, the features which characterise the lower waterfall in the grounds of Rydale.

Whence hangs, in the cool shade, the listless swain
 Lingering behind his disappearing wain.
 — Did Sabine grace adorn my living line,
 Bandusia's praise, wild Stream, should yield to thine !
 Never shall ruthless minister of Death
 'Mid thy soft glooms the glittering steel unsheath ;
 No goblets shall, for thee, be crowned with flowers,
 No kid with piteous outcry thrill thy bowers ;
 The mystic shapes that by thy margin rove
 A more benignant sacrifice approve ;
 A Mind, that, in a calm angelic mood
 Of happy wisdom, meditating good,
 Beholds, of all from her high powers required,
 Much done, and much designed, and more desired, —
 Harmonious thoughts, a soul by truth refined,
 Entire affection for all human kind.

— Sweet rill, farewell ! To-morrow's noon again
 Shall hide me, wooing long thy wildwood strain ;
 But now the sun has gained his western road,
 And eve's mild hour invites my steps abroad.

While, near the midway cliff, the silvered kite
 In many a whistling circle wheels her flight ;
 Slant watery lights, from parting clouds, apace
 Travel along the precipice's base ;
 Cheering its naked waste of scattered stone,
 By lichens grey, and scanty moss, o'ergrown ;
 Where scarce the foxglove peeps, or thistle's beard :
 And desert stone-chat, all day long, is heard.

How pleasant, as the sun declines, to view
 The spacious landscape change in form and hue !

Here, vanish, as in mist, before a flood
Of bright obscurity, hill, lawn, and wood ;
There, objects, by the searching beams betrayed,
Come forth, and here retire in purple shade ;
Even the white stems of birch, the cottage white,
Soften their glare before the mellow light ;
The skiffs, at anchor where with umbrage wide
Yon chesnuts half the latticed boat-house hide,
Shed from their sides, that face the sun's slant beam,
Strong flakes of radiance on the tremulous stream :
Raised by yon travelling flock, a dusty cloud
Mounts from the road, and spreads its moving shroud ;
The shepherd, all involved in wreaths of fire,
Now shows a shadowy speck, and now is lost entire.

Into a gradual calm the zephyrs sink,
A blue rim borders all the lake's still brink :
And now, on every side, the surface breaks
Into blue spots, and slowly lengthening streaks ;
Here, plots of sparkling water tremble bright
With thousand thousand twinkling points of light ;
There, waves that, hardly weltering, die away,
Tip their smooth ridges with a softer ray,
And now the universal tides repose,
And, brightly blue, the burnished mirror glows,
Save where, along the shady western marge,
Coasts, with industrious oar, the charcoal barge ;
The sails are dropped, the poplar's foliage sleeps,
And insects clothe, like dust, the glassy deeps.

Their panniered train a groupe of potters goad,
Winding from side to side up the steep road ;
The peasant, from yon cliff of fearful edge,
Shot, down the headlong path darts with his sledge ;

Bright beams the lonely mountain horse illumine,
 Feeding 'mid purple heath, "green rings*," and broom;
 While the sharp slope the slackened team confounds,
 Downward the ponderous timber-wain resounds †;
 In foamy breaks the rill, with merry song,
 Dashed o'er the rough rock, lightly leaps along;
 From lonesome chapel at the mountain's feet,
 Three humble bells their rustic chime repeat;
 Sounds from the water-side the hammered boat;
 And blasted quarry thunders, heard remote!

Even here, amid the sweep of endless woods,
 Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs, and falling floods,
 Not undelightful are the simplest charms,
 Found by the verdant door of mountain farms.

Sweetly ferocious ‡, round his native walks,
 Pride of his sister-wives, the monarch stalks;
 Spur-clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread;
 A crest of purple tops his warrior head.
 Bright sparks his black and haggard eye-ball hurls
 Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls;
 Whose state, like pine-trees, waving to and fro,
 Droops, and o'er-canopies his regal brow;
 On tiptoe reared, he strains his clarion throat,
 Threatened by faintly-answering farms remote:
 Again with his shrill voice the mountain rings,
 While, flapped with conscious pride, resound his wings!

* "Vivid rings of green." — GREENWOOD'S Poem on Shooting.

† "Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings." — BEATTIE.

‡ "Dolcemente feroce." — TASSO. — In this description of the cock, I remembered a spirited one of the same animal in the *l'Agriculture, ou Les Géorgiques Françaises*, of M. Rossuet.

Brightening the cliffs between, where sombrous pine
And yew-trees o'er the silver rocks recline ;
I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
Dwarf panniered steeds, and men, and numerous wains :
How busy the enormous hive within,
While Echo dallies with the various din !
Some (hardly heard their chisels' clinking sound)
Toil, small as pigmies in the gulf profound ;
Some, dim between the ærial cliffs descried,
O'erwalk the slender plank from side to side ;
These, by the pale-blue rocks that ceaseless ring,
Glad from their airy baskets hang and sing.

Hung o'er a cloud, above the steep that rears
An edge all flame, the broadening sun appears ;
A long blue bar its ægis orb divides,
And breaks the spreading of its golden tides ;
And now it touches on the purple steep
That flings its image on the pictured deep.
'Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs aspire,
With towers and woods a "prospect all on fire ;"
The coves and secret hollows, through a ray
Of fainter gold, a purple gleam betray ;
The gilded turf invests with richer green
Each speck of lawn the broken rocks between ;
Deep yellow beams the scattered stems illumine,
Far in the level forest's central gloom ;
Waving his hat, the shepherd, from the vale,
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,
That, barking busy, 'mid the glittering rocks,
Hunts, where he points, the intercepted flocks.
Where oaks o'erhang the road the radiance shoots
On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted roots ;

The Druid stones their lighted fane unfold,
And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold ;
Sunk to a curve, the day-star lessens still,
Gives one bright glance, and drops behind the hill.*

In these secluded vales, if village fame,
Confirmed by silver hairs, belief may claim ;
When up the hills, as now, retired the light,
Strange apparitions mocked the gazer's sight.

A desperate form appears, that spurs his steed
Along the midway cliffs with violent speed ;
Unhurt pursues his lengthened flight, while all
Attend, at every stretch, his headlong fall.
Anon, in order mounts a gorgeous show
Of horsemen shadows winding to and fro ;
At intervals imperial banners stream,
And now the van reflects the solar beam,
The rear through iron brown betrays a sullen gleam ;
Lost gradual, o'er the heights in pomp they go,
While silent stands the admiring vale below ;
Till, save the lonely beacon, all is fled,
That tips with eve's last gleam his spiry head.†

Now, while the solemn evening shadows sail,
On red slow-waving pinions, down the vale ;
And, fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines,
Its darkening boughs and leaves, in stronger lines,
How pleasant near the tranquil lake to stray
Where winds the road along a secret bay ;

* From Thomson. See Scott's Critical Essays.

† See a description of an appearance of this kind in Clark's Survey of the Lakes, accompanied by vouchers of its veracity, that may amuse the reader.

By rills that tumble down the woody steeps,
And run in transport to the dimpling deeps ;
Along the " wild meandering shore " to view
Obsequious Grace the winding Swan pursue :
He swells his lifted chest, and backward flings
His bridling neck between his towering wings ;
In all the majesty of ease, divides
And, glorying, looks around the silent tides ;
On as he floats, the silvered waters glow,
Proud of the varying arch and moveless form of snow,
While tender cares and mild domestic Loves,
With furtive watch pursue her as she moves ;
The Female with a meeker charm succeeds,
And her brown little-ones around her leads,
Nibbling the water lilies as they pass,
Or playing wanton with the floating grass.
She, in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
Forgets, unwearied watching every side ;
She calls them near, and with affection sweet
Alternately relieves their weary feet ;
Alternately they mount her back, and rest
Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest.

Long may ye float upon these floods serene ;
Yours be these holms untrodden, still, and green,
Whose leafy shades fence off the blustering gale,
Where breathes in peace the lily of the vale.
Yon Isle, which feels not even the milk-maid's feet,
Yet hears her song, " by distance made more sweet,"
Yon isle conceals your home, your cottage bower,
Fresh water rushes strew the verdant floor ;
Long grass and willows form the woven wall,
And swings above the roof the poplar tall.

Thence issuing often with unwieldy stalk,
With broad black feet ye crush your flowery walk ;
Or, from the neighbouring water, hear at morn
The hound, the horse's tread, and mellow horn ;
Involve your serpent necks in changeful rings,
Rolled wantonly between your slippery wings,
Or, starting up with noise and rude delight,
Force half upon the wave your cumbrous flight.

Fair Swan ! by all a mother's joys caressed,
Haply some wretch has eyed, and called thee blessed ;
The while upon some sultry summer's day
She dragged her babes along this weary way ;
Or taught their limbs along the burning road
A few short steps to totter with their load.

I see her now, denied to lay her head,
On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built shed,
Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
By pointing to a shooting star on high :
I hear, while in the forest depth, he sees
The Moon's fixed gaze between the opening trees,
In broken sounds her elder grief demand,
And skyward lift, like one that prays, his hand,
If, in that country, where he dwells afar,
His father views that good, that kindly star ;
— Ah me ! all light is mute amid the gloom,
The interlunar cavern, of the tomb.
— When low-hung clouds each star of summer hide,
And fireless are the valleys far and wide,
Where the brook brawls along the painful road,
Dark with bat-haunted ashes stretching broad,
Oft has she taught them on her lap to play
Delighted, with the glow-worm's harmless ray

Tossed light from hand to hand ; while on the ground
Small circles of green radiance gleam around.

Oh ! when the sleety showers her path assail,
And roars between the hills the torrent gale.
— No more her breath can thaw their fingers cold,
Their frozen arms her neck no more can fold ;
Weak roof a cowering form two babes to shield,
And faint the fire a dying heart can yield !
Press the sad kiss, fond mother ! vainly fears
Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its tears ;
No tears can chill them, and no bosom warms,
Thy breast their death-bed, confined in thine arms.

Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling sedge,
And feeding pike starts from the water's edge,
Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
Wetting, that drip upon the water still ;
And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.

Now, with religious awe, the farewell light
Blends with the solemn colouring of the night ;
'Mid groves of clouds that crest the mountain's brow,
And round the West's proud lodge their shadows throw,
Like Una shining on her gloomy way,
The half-seen form of Twilight roams astray ;
Shedding, through paly loopholes mild and small,
Gleams that upon the lake's still bosom fall,
Soft o'er the surface creep those lustres pale
Tracking the fitful motions of the gale.

With restless interchange at once the bright
Wins on the shade, the shade upon the light.
No favoured eye was e'er allowed to gaze
On lovelier spectacle in faery days ;
When gentle Spirits urged a sportive chase,
Brushing with lucid wands the water's face ;
While music, stealing round the glimmering deeps,
Charmed the tall circle of the enchanted steeps.
— The lights are vanishad from the watery plains :
No wreck of all the pageantry remains.
Unheeded night has overcome the vales :
On the dark earth the baffled vision fails ;
The latest linger of the forest train,
The lone black fir, forsakes the faded plain ;
Last evening sight, the cottage smoke, no more,
Lost in the thickened darkness, glimmers hoar ;
And, towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,
Like a black wall, the mountain steeps appear.
— Now o'er the soothed accordant heart we feel
A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,
And ever, as we fondly muse, we find
The soft gloom deepening on the tranquil mind.
Stay ! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions, stay !
Ah no ! as fades the vale, they fade away :
Yet still the tender, vacant gloom remains ;
Still the cold cheek its shuddering tear retains.

The bird, who ceased, with fading light to thread
Silent the hedge or steaming rivulet's bed,
From his grey re-appearing tower shall soon
Salute with boding note the rising moon,
Frosting with hoary light the pearly ground,
And pouring deeper blue to Æther's bound ;

And pleased her solemn pomp of clouds to fold
In robes of azure, fleecy-white, and gold.

See, o'er the eastern hill, where darkness broods
O'er all its vanished dells, and lawns, and woods ;
Where but a mass of shade the sight can trace,
She lifts in silence up her lovely face :
Above the gloomy valley flings her light,
Far to the western slopes with hamlets white ;
And gives, where woods the chequered upland strew,
To the green corn of summer autumn's hue.

Thus Hope, first pouring from her blessed horn
Her dawn, far lovelier than the Moon's own morn ;
'Till higher mounted, strives in vain to cheer
The weary hills, impervious, blackening near ;
— Yet does she still, undaunted, throw the while
On darling spots remote her tempting smile.

— Even now she decks for me a distant scene,
(For dark and broad the gulf of time between)
Gilding that cottage with her fondest ray,
(Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my way ;
How fair its lawns and sheltering woods appear !
How sweet its streamlet murmurs in mine ear !)
Where we, my Friend, to happy days shall rise,
'Till our small share of hardly-paining sighs
(For sighs will ever trouble human breath)
Creep hushed into the tranquil breast of Death.

But now the clear bright Moon her zenith gains,
And rimy without speck extend the plains ;
The deepest dell the mountain's front displays
Scarce hides a shadow from her searching rays ;

From the dark-blue “faint silvery threads” divide
The hills, while gleams below the azure tide ;
The scene is wakened, yet its peace unbroke,
By silvered wreaths of quiet charcoal smoke,
That, o’er the ruins of the fallen wood,
Steal down the hills, and spread along the flood.

The song of mountain streams, unheard by day,
Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.
Air listens, as the sleeping water still,
To catch the spiritual music of the hill,
Broke only by the slow clock tolling deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferry-man from sleep,
Soon followed by his hollow-parting oar,
And echoed hoof approaching the far shore ;
Sound of closed gate, across the water borne,
Hurrying the feeding hare through rustling corn ;
The tremulous sob of the complaining owl ;
And at long intervals the mill-dog’s howl ;
The distant forge’s swinging thump profound ;
Or yell, in the deep woods, of lonely hound.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

TAKEN DURING

A PEDESTRIAN TOUR

AMONG

THE ALPS.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

OF THE

A PHOENICIAN TOWN

AND

THE ALPS.

TO

THE REV. ROBERT JONES,

FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

DEAR SIR,

HOWEVER desirous I might have been of giving you proofs of the high place you hold in my esteem, I should have been cautious of wounding your delicacy by thus publicly addressing you, had not the circumstance of my having accompanied you amongst the Alps, seemed to give this dedication a propriety sufficient to do away any scruples which your modesty might otherwise have suggested.

In inscribing this little work to you, I consult my heart. You know well how great is the difference between two companions lolling in a post-chaise, and two travellers plodding slowly along the road, side by side, each with his little knapsack of necessaries upon his shoulders. How much more of heart between the two latter !

I am happy in being conscious I shall have one reader who will approach the conclusion of these few pages with regret. You they must certainly interest, in reminding you of moments to which you can hardly look back without a pleasure not the less dear from a shade of melancholy. You will meet with few images without recollecting the spot where we observed them together ; consequently, whatever is feeble in my design, or spiritless in my colouring, will be amply supplied by your own memory.

With still greater propriety I might have inscribed to you a description of some of the features of your native mountains, through which we have wandered together, in the same manner, with so much pleasure. But the sea-sunsets, which give such splendour to the vale of Clwyd, Snowdon, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethgelert, Menai and her Druids, the Alpine steeps of the Conway, and the still more interesting windings of the wizard stream of the Dee, remain yet untouched. Apprehensive that my pencil may never be exercised on these subjects, I cannot let slip this opportunity of thus publicly assuring you with how much affection and esteem

I am, dear Sir,

Most sincerely yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

London, 1793.

III.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES.

Happiness (if she had been to be found on Earth) amongst the Charms of Nature — Pleasures of the pedestrian Traveller — Author crosses France to the Alps — Present State of the Grande Chartreuse — Lake of Como — Time, Sunset — Same Scene, Twilight — Same Scene, Morning, its voluptuous Character; Old Man and Forest Cottage Music — River Tusa — Via Mala and Grison Gipsy — Sckellenen-thal — Lake of Uri — Stormy Sunset — Chapel of William Tell — Force of Local Emotion — Chamois-chaser — View of the higher Alps Manner of Life of a Swiss Mountaineer, interspersed with Views of the higher Alps — Golden Age of the Alps — Life and Views continued — Ranz des Vaches, famous Swiss Air — Abbey of Einsiedlen and its Pilgrims — Valley of Chamouny — Mont Blanc — Slavery of Savoy — Influence of Liberty on Cottage Happiness — France — Wish for the Extirpation of Slavery — Conclusion.

WERE there, below, a spot of holy ground
 Where from distress a refuge might be found,
 And solitude prepare the soul for heaven;
 Sure, Nature's God that spot to man had given
 Where falls the purple morning far and wide
 In flakes of light upon the mountain side;
 Where with loud voice the power of waters shakes
 The leafy wood, or sleeps in quiet lakes.

Yet not unrecompensed the man shall roam,
 Who at the call of summer quits his home,

And plods through some far realm o'er vale and height,
Though seeking only holiday delight ;
At least, not owning to himself an aim
To which the Sage would give a prouder name.
No gains too cheaply earned his fancy cloy,
Though every passing zephyr whispers joy ;
Brisk toil, alternating with ready ease,
Feeds the clear current of his sympathies.
For him sod seats the cottage door adorn ;
And peeps the far-off spire, his evening bourn !
Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
And dear the velvet green-sward to his tread :
Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's flaming eye ?
Upward he looks — " and calls it luxury ;"
Kind Nature's charities his steps attend ;
In every babbling brook he finds a friend ;
While chastening thoughts of sweetest use, bestowed
By Wisdom, moralise his pensive road.
Host of his welcome inn, the noon-tide bower,
To his spare meal he calls the passing poor ;
He views the Sun uplift his golden fire,
Or sink, with heart alive like Memnon's lyre* ;
Blesses the Moon that comes with kindly ray,
To light him shaken by his rugged way ;
With bashful fear no cottage children steal
From him, a brother at the cottage meal ;
His humble looks no shy restraint impart,
Around him plays at will the virgin heart.
While unsuspended wheels the village dance,
The maidens eye him with enquiring glance,

* The lyre of Memmon is reported to have emitted melancholy or cheerful tones, as it was touched by the sun's evening or morning rays.

Much wondering what sad stroke of crazing Care
Or desperate Love could lead a Wanderer there.

Me, lured by hope its sorrows to remove,
A heart that could not much itself approve
O'er Gallia's wastes of corn dejected led,
Her road elms rustling high above my head,
Or through her truant pathways' native charms,
By secret villages and lonely farms,
To where the Alps ascending white in air,
Toy with the sun, and glitter from afar.

Even now, emerging from the forest's gloom,
I heave a sigh at hoary Chartreuse' doom.
Where now is fled that Power whose frown severe
Tamed "sober Reason" till she crouched in fear?
The cloister startles at the gleam of arms,
And Blasphemy the shuddering fane alarms;
Nod the cloud-piercing pines their troubled heads;
Spires, rocks, and lawns, a browner night o'erspreads;
Strong terror checks the female peasant's sighs,
And start the astonished shades at female eyes.
That thundering tube the aged angler hears,
And swells the groaning torrent with his tears;
From Bruno's forest screams the affrighted jay,
And slow the insulted eagle wheels away.
The cross, by angels on the ærial rock
Planted*, a flight of laughing demons mock.
The "parting Genius" sighs with hollow breath
Along the mystic streams of Life and Death.†

* Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spiry rocks of Chartreuse, which have every appearance of being inaccessible.

† Names of Rivers at the Chartreuse.

Swelling the outcry dull, that long resounds
Portentous through her old woods' trackless bounds,
Vallombre*, 'mid her falling fanes, deplores,
For ever broke, the sabbath of her bowers.

More pleased, my foot the hidden margin roves
Of Como, bosomed deep in chesnut groves.
No meadows thrown between, the giddy steeps
Tower, bare or sylvan, from the narrow deeps.
— To towns, whose shades of no rude sound complain,
To ringing team unknown and grating wain,
To flat-roofed towns, that touch the water's bound,
Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
Or, from the bending rocks, obtrusive cling,
And o'er the whitened wave their shadows fling,
The pathway leads, as round the steeps it twines,
And Silence loves its purple roof of vines;
The viewless lingerer hence, at evening, sees
From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees;
Or marks, 'mid opening cliffs, fair dark-eyed maids
Tend the small harvest of their garden glades,
Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to view
Stretch, o'er the pictured mirror, broad and blue,
Tracking the yellow sun from steep to steep,
As up the opposing hills with tortoise foot they creep.
Here, half a village shines, in gold arrayed,
Bright as the moon; half hides itself in shade:
While, from amid the darkened roofs, the spire,
Restlessly flashing, seems to mount like fire:
There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
Rich golden verdure on the waves below.
Slow glides the sail along the illumined shore,
And steals into the shade the lazy oar;

* Name of one of the valleys of the Chartreuse.

Soft bosoms breathe around contagious sighs,
And amorous music on the water dies.

How blessed, delicious scene ! the eye that greets
Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats ;
The unwearied sweep of wood thy cliffs that scales ;
The never-ending waters of thy vales ;
The cots, those dim religious groves embower,
Or, under rocks that from the water tower,
Insinuated, sprinkling all the shore ;
Each with his household boat beside the door,
Whose flaccid sails in forms fantastic droop,
Brightening the gloom where thick the forests stoop ;
— Thy torrents shooting from the clear-blue sky,
Thy towns, that cleave like swallows' nests, on high ;
That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descried
Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
Whence lutes and voices down the enchanted woods
Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods ;
— Thy lake, 'mid smoking woods, that blue and grey
Gleams, streaked or dappled, hid from morning's ray
Slow travelling down the western hills, to fold
Its green-tinged margin in a blaze of gold ;
From thickly-glittering spires, the matin bell
Calling the woodman from his desert cell,
A summons to the sound of oars that pass
Spotting the steaming deeps, to early mass ;
Slow swells the service, o'er the water borne,
While fill each pause the ringing woods of morn.
Farewell those forms that in thy noon-tide shade
Rest near their little plots of wheaten glade ;
Those charms that bind the soul in powerless trance,
Lip-dewing song, and ringlet-tossing dance.

Where sparkling eyes and breaking smiles illumine
The sylvan cabin's lute-enlivened gloom.

— Alas ! the very murmur of the streams
Breathes o'er the failing soul voluptuous dreams,
While Slavery, forcing the sunk mind to dwell
On joys that might disgrace the captive's cell,
Her shameless timbrel shakes on Como's marge,
And winds, from bay to bay, the vocal barge.

Yet arts are thine that soothe the unquiet heart,
And smiles to Solitude and Want impart.
I loved by silent cottage-doors to roam,
The far-off peasant's day-deserted home ;
And once I pierced the mazes of a wood,
Where, far from public haunt, a cabin stood ;
There by the door a hoary-headed Sire
Touched with his withered hand an ancient lyre ;
Beneath an old grey oak, as violets lie,
Stretched at his feet with stedfast, upward eye,
His children's children joined the holy sound ;
— A Hermit with his family around !

But let us hence, for fair Locarno smiles
Embowered in walnut slopes and citron isles ;
Or seek at eve the banks of Tusa's stream,
While, 'mid dim towers and woods, her * waters gleam ;
From the bright wave, in solemn gloom, retire
The dull-red steeps, and, darkening still, aspire
To where afar rich orange lustres glow
Round undistinguished clouds, and rocks, and snow ;
Or, led where Via Mala's chasms confine
The indignant waters of the infant Rhine,

* The river along whose banks you descend in crossing the Alps by the Simplon Pass.

Hang o'er the abyss: — the else impervious gloom
His burning eyes with fearful light illumine.

The Grison gipsy here her tent hath placed,
Sole human tenant of the piny waste ;
Her tawny skin, dark eyes, and glossy locks,
Bend o'er the smoke that curls beneath the rocks.
— The mind condemned, without reprieve, to go
O'er life's long deserts with its charge of woe,
With sad congratulation joins the train,
Where beasts and men together o'er the plain
Move on — a mighty caravan of pain ;
Hope, strength, and courage, social suffering brings,
Freshening the waste of sand with shades and springs.
She, solitary, through the desert drear
Spontaneous wanders, hand in hand with Fear.

A giant moan along the forest swells
Protracted, and the twilight storm foretells,
And, ruining from the cliffs, their deafening load
Tumbles, — the wildering Thunder slips abroad ;
On the high summits Darkness comes and goes,
Hiding their fiery clouds, their rocks, and snows ;
The torrent, traversed by the lustre broad,
Starts, like a horse beside the flashing road ;
In the roofed bridge*, at that terrific hour,
She seeks a shelter from the battering shower.
— Fierce comes the river down ; the crashing wood
Gives way, and half its pines torment the flood ;

* Most of the bridges among the Alps are of wood, and covered : these bridges have a heavy appearance, and rather injure the effect of the scenery in some places.

Fearful, beneath, the Water-spirits call,*
And the bridge vibrates, tottering to its fall.

— Heavy, and dull, and cloudy is the night;
No star supplies the comfort of its light,
A single taper in the vale profound
Shifts, while the Alps dilated glimmer round;
And, opposite, the waning Moon hangs still
And red, above her melancholy hill.
By the deep quiet gloom appalled, she sighs,
Stoops her sick head, and shuts her weary eyes.
She hears, upon the mountain forest's brow,
The death-dog, howling loud and long below;
On viewless fingers counts the valley-clock,
Followed by drowsy crow of midnight cock.
The dry leaves stir as with the serpent's walk,
And, far beneath, Banditti voices talk;
Behind her hill, the Moon, all crimson, rides,
And his red eyes the slinking Water hides.
— Vexed by the darkness, from the piny gulf
Ascending, nearer howls the famished wolf,
While through the stillness scatters wild dismay
Her babe's small cry, that leads him to his prey.

Now, passing Urseren's open vale serene,
Her quiet streams, and hills of downy green,
Plunge with the Russ embrowned by Terror's breath,
Where danger roofs the narrow walks of death;
By floods, that, thundering from their dizzy height,
Swell more gigantic on the stedfast sight;

* "Red came the river down, and loud and oft
The angry Spirit of the water shrieked."

Black drizzling crags, that, beaten by the din,
Vibrate, as if a voice complained within ;
Bare steeps, where Desolation stalks, afraid,
Unstedfast, by a blasted yew upstayed ;
By cells * whose image, trembling as he prays,
Awe-struck, the kneeling peasant scarce surveys ;
Loose-hanging rocks the Day's blessed eye that hide,
And crosses † reared to Death on every side,
Which with cold kiss Devotion planted near,
And, bending, watered with the human tear,
That faded " silent " from her upward eye,
Unmoved with each rude form of Danger nigh,
Fixed on the anchor left by Him who saves
Alike in whelming snows and roaring waves.

On as we move, a softer prospect opes,
Calm huts, and lawns between, and sylvan slopes,
While mists, suspended on the expiring gale,
Moveless o'erhang the deep secluded vale,
The beams of evening, slipping soft between,
Gently illuminate a sober scene ;
Winding its dark-green wood and emerald glade,
The still vale lengthens underneath the shade ;
While in soft gloom the scattering bowers recede,
Green dewy lights adorn the freshened mead,
On the low brown wood-huts ‡ delighted sleep
Along the brightened gloom reposing deep :
While pastoral pipes and streams the landscape lull,
And bells of passing mules that tinkle dull,

* The Catholic religion prevails here : these cells are, as is well known, very common in the Catholic countries, planted, like the Roman tombs, along the road side.

† Crosses commemorative of the deaths of travellers by the fall of snow and other accidents are very common along this dreadful road.

‡ The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are all built of wood.

In solemn shapes before the admiring eye
Dilated hang the misty pines on high,
Huge convent domes with pinnacles and towers,
And antique castles seen through drizzling showers.

From such romantic dreams, my soul, awake !
Lo ! Fear looks silent down on Uri's lake,
Where, by the unpathwayed margin, still and dread,
Was never heard the plodding peasant's tread.
Tower like a wall the naked rocks, or reach
Far o'er the secret water dark with beech ;
More high, to where creation seems to end,
Shade above shade, the aërial pines ascend,
Yet with his infants Man undaunted creeps
And hangs his small wood-cabin on the steeps.
Where'er below amid the savage scene
Peeps out a little speck of smiling green,
A garden-plot the desert air perfumes,
'Mid the dark pines a little orchard blooms ;
A zig-zag path from the domestic skiff,
Thridding the painful crag, surmounts the cliff.
— Before those hermit doors, that never know
The face of traveller passing to and fro,
No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell
For whom at morning tolled the funeral bell ;
Their watch-dog ne'er his angry bark foregoes,
Touched by the beggar's moan of human woes ;
The grassy seat beneath their casement shade
The pilgrim's wistful eye hath never stayed.
— There, did the iron Genius not disdain
The gentle Power that haunts the myrtle plain,
There, might the love-sick maiden sit, and chide
The insuperable rocks and severing tide ;

There, watch at eve her lover's sun-gilt sail
Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale :
There, list at midnight till is heard no more,
Below, the echo of his parting oar.

'Mid stormy vapours ever driving by,
Where ospreys, cormorants, and herons cry,
Hovering o'er rugged wastes too bleak to rear
That common growth of earth, the foodful ear ;
Where the green apple shrivels on the spray,
And pines the unripened pear in summer's kindest ray ;
Even here Content has fixed her smiling reign
With Independence, child of high Disdain.
Exulting 'mid the winter of the skies,
Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom flies,
And often grasps her sword, and often eyes ;
Her crest a bough of Winter's bleakest pine,
Strange "weeds" and Alpine plants her helm entwine ;
And, wildly pausing, oft she hangs aghast,
While thrills the "Spartan fife" between the blast.

'Tis storm ; and, hid in mist from hour to hour,
All day the floods a deepening murmur pour ;
The sky is veiled, and every cheerful sight :
Dark is the region as with coming night ;
But what a sudden burst of overpowering light !
Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
Glances the fire-clad eagle's wheeling form ;
Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
The wood-crowned cliffs that o'er the lake recline ;
Wide o'er the Alps a hundred streams unfold,
At once to pillars turned that flame with gold :
Behind his sail the peasant strives to shun
The west, that burns like one dilated sun,

Where in a mighty crucible expire
The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of fire.

But, lo ! the Boatman, overawed, before
The pictured fane of Tell suspends his oar ;
Confused the Marathonian tale appears,
While burn in his full eyes the glorious tears.
And who that walks where men of ancient days
Have wrought with godlike arm the deeds of praise,
Feels not the spirit of the place control,
Exalt, and agitate, his labouring soul ?
Say, who, by thinking on Canadian hills,
Or wild Aosta lulled by Alpine rills,
On Zutphen's plain ; or where, with softened gaze,
The old grey stones the plaided chief surveys ;
Can guess the high resolve, the cherished pain,
Of him whom passion rivets to the plain, [sigh,
Where breathed the gale that caught Wolfe's happiest
And the last sunbeam fell on Bayard's eye ;
Where bleeding Sidney from the cup retired,
And glad Dundee in " faint huzzas " expired ?

But now with other mind I stand alone
Upon the summit of this naked cone,
And watch, from pike to pike *, amid the sky,
Small as a bird the chamois-chaser fly,
† Through vacant worlds where Nature never gave
A brook to murmur or a bough to wave,
Which unsubstantial Phantoms sacred keep ;
Thro' worlds where Life, and Sound, and Motion sleep ;

* Pike is a word very commonly used in the north of England, to signify a high mountain of the conic form, as Langdale pike, &c.

† For most of the images in the next sixteen verses I am indebted to M. Raymond's interesting observations annexed to his translation of Coxe's Tour in Switzerland.

Where Silence still her death-like reign extends,
Save when the startling cliff unfrequent rends ;
In the deep snow the mighty ruin drowned,
Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf abortive sound.
— 'Tis his while wandering on, from height to height,
To see a planet's pomp and steady light
In the least star of scarce-appearing night,
While the near Moon, that coasts the vast profound,
Wheels pale and silent her diminished round,
And far and wide the icy summits blaze,
Rejoicing in the glory of her rays :
To him the day-star glitters small and bright,
Shorn of its beams, insufferably white,
And he can look beyond the sun, and view
Those fast-receding depths of sable blue,
Flying till vision can no more pursue !
— At once bewildering mists around him close,
And cold and hunger are his least of woes ;
The Demon of the snow, with angry roar
Descending, shuts for aye his prison door.
Then with Despair's whole weight his spirits sink,
No bread to feed him, and the snow his drink,
While, ere his eyes can close upon the day,
The eagle of the Alps o'ershades her prey.

Hence shall we turn where, heard with fear afar,
Thunders through echoing pines the headlong Aar ?
Or rather stay to taste the mild delights
Of pensive Underwalden's* pastoral heights ?

* The people of this Canton are supposed to be of a more melancholy disposition than the other inhabitants of the Alps : this, if true, may proceed from their living more secluded.

— Is there who 'mid these awful wilds has seen
The native Genii walk the mountain green?
Or heard, while other worlds their charms reveal,
Soft music from the aërial summit steal?
While o'er the desert, answering every close,
Rich steam of sweetest perfume comes and goes.
— And sure there is a secret Power that reigns
Here, where no trace of man the spot profanes,
Nought * but the herds that, pasturing upward, creep,
Hung dim-discovered from the dangerous steep,
Or summer hamlet, flat and bare, on high
Suspended, 'mid the quiet of the sky.
How still! no irreligious sound or sight
Rouses the soul from her severe delight.
An idle voice the sabbath region fills
Of Deep that calls to Deep across the hills,
Broke only by the melancholy sound
Of drowsy bells, for ever tinkling round;
Faint wail of eagle melting into blue
Beneath the cliffs, and pine-woods' steady *sugh* †;
The solitary heifer's deepened low;
Or rumbling, heard remote, of falling snow;
Save when, a stranger seen below, the boy
Shouts from the echoing hills with savage joy.

When warm from myrtle bays and tranquil seas,
Comes on, to whisper hope, the vernal breeze,
When hums the mountain bee in May's glad ear,
And emerald isles to spot the heights appear,
When shouts and lowing herds the valley fill,
And louder torrents stun the noon-tide hill,

* This picture is from the middle region of the Alps.

† *Sugh*, a Scotch word expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.

When fragrant scents beneath the enchanted tread
Spring up, his choicest wealth around him spread,
The pastoral Swiss begins the cliffs to scale,
To silence leaving the deserted vale ;
Mounts, where the verdure leads, from stage to stage,
And pastures on, as in the Patriarchs' age :
O'er lofty heights serene and still they go,
And hear the rattling thunder far below ;
They cross the chasmy torrent's foam-lit bed,
Rocked on the dizzy larch's narrow tread ;
Or steal beneath loose mountains, half deterred,
That sigh and shudder to the lowing herd.
— I see him, up the midway cliff he creeps
To where a scanty knot of verdure peeps,
Thence down the steep a pile of grass he throws,
The fodder of his herds in winter snows.
Far different life to what tradition hoar
Transmits of days more blest in times of yore ;
Then Summer lengthened out his season bland,
And with rock-honey flowed the happy land.
Continual fountains welling cheered the waste,
And plants were wholesome, now of deadly taste.
Nor Winter yet his frozen stores had piled,
Usurping where the fairest herbage smiled :
Nor Hunger forced the herds from pastures bare
For scanty food the treacherous cliffs to dare.
Then the milk-thistle bade those herds demand
Three times a day the pail and welcome hand.
But human vices have provoked the rod
Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
Thus does the father to his sons relate,
On the lone mountain-top, their changed estate.
Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts
Joys only given to uncorrupted hearts.

'Tis morn : with gold the verdant mountain glows ;
More high, the snowy peaks with hues of rose.
Far-stretched beneath the many-tinted hills,
A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,
A solemn sea ! whose vales and mountains round
Stand motionless, to awful silence bound :
A gulf of gloomy blue, that opens wide
And bottomless, divides the midway tide :
Like leaning masts of stranded ships appear
The pines that near the coast their summits rear ;
Of cabins, woods, and lawns, a pleasant shore
Bounds calm and clear the chaos still and hoar ;
Loud through that midway gulf ascending, sound
Unnumbered streams with hollow roar profound :
Mount through the nearer mist the chant of birds,
And talking voices, and the low of herds,
The bark of dogs, the drowsy tinkling bell,
And wild-wood mountain lutes of saddest swell.
Think not, suspended from the cliff on high,
He looks below with undelighted eye.
— No vulgar joy is his, at even-tide
Stretched on the scented mountain's purple side :
For as the pleasures of his simple day
Beyond his native valley seldom stray,
Nought round its darling precincts can he find
But brings some past enjoyment to his mind,
While Hope, that ceaseless leans on Pleasure's urn,
Binds her wild wreaths, and whispers his return.

Once Man entirely free, alone and wild,
Was blessed as free — for he was Nature's child.
He, all superior but his God disdained,
Walked none restraining, and by none restrained,

Confessed no law but what his reason taught,
Did all he wished, and wished but what he ought.
As Man in his primeval dower arrayed
The image of his glorious Sire displayed,
Even so, by vestal Nature guarded, here
The traces of primeval Man appear ;
The native dignity no forms debase,
The eye sublime, and surly lion-grace.
The slave of none, of beasts alone the lord,
His book he prizes, nor neglects his sword ;
Well taught by that to feel his rights, prepared
With this " the blessings he enjoys to guard."

And, as his native hills encircle ground
For many a wondrous victory renowned,
The work of Freedom daring to oppose,
With few in arms*, innumerable foes,
When to those glorious fields his steps are led,
An unknown power connects him with the dead :
For images of other worlds are there ;
Awful the light, and holy is the air.
Uncertain through his fierce uncultured soul,
Like lighted tempests, troubled transports roll ;
To viewless realms his Spirit towers amain,
Beyond the senses and their little reign.

* Alluding to several battles which the Swiss in very small numbers have gained over their oppressors, the house of Austria ; and, in particular, to one fought at Næffels near Glarus, where three hundred and thirty men defeated an army of between fifteen and twenty thousand Austrians. Scattered over the valley are to be found eleven stones, with this inscription, 1388, the year the battle was fought, marking out, as I was told upon the spot, the several places where the Austrians attempting to make a stand were repulsed anew.

And oft, when passed that solemn vision by,
He holds with God himself communion high,
Where the dread peal of swelling torrents fills
The sky-roofed temple of the eternal hills ;
Or, when upon the mountain's silent brow
Reclined, he sees, above him and below,
Bright stars of ice and azure fields of snow ;
While needle peaks of granite shooting bare
Tremble in ever-varying tints of air :
— Great joy, by horror tamed, dilates his heart,
And the near heavens their own delights impart.
— When the Sun bids the gorgeous scene farewell,
Alps overlooking Alps their state up-swell ;
Huge Pikes of Darkness named, of Fear and Storms *,
Lift, all serene, their still, illumined forms,
In sea-like reach of prospect round him spread,
Tinged like an angel's smile all rosy red.

When downward to his winter hut he goes,
Dear and more dear the lessening circle grows ;
That hut which from the hills his eye employs
So oft, the central point of all his joys.
And as a Swift, by tender cares opprest,
Peeps often ere she dart into her nest,
So to the untrodden floor, where round him looks
His father, helpless as the babe he rocks,
Oft he descends to nurse the brother pair,
Till storm and driving ice blockade him there.
There, safely guarded by the woods behind,
He hears the chiding of the baffled wind,
Hears Winter, calling all his Terrors round,
Rush down the living rocks with whirlwind sound.

* As Schreck-Horn, the pike of terror; Wetter-Horn, the pike of storms, &c. &c.

Through Nature's vale his homely pleasures glide,
Unstain'd by envy, discontent, and pride;
The bound of all his vanity, to deck,
With one bright bell, a favourite Heifer's neck;
Well pleased upon some simple annual feast,
Remembered half the year and hoped the rest,
If dairy produce from his inner hoard
Of thrice ten summers consecrate the board.
— Alas! in every clime a flying ray
Is all we have to cheer our wintry way.
“ Here,” cried a thoughtful Swain, upon whose head
The “ blossoms of the grave” were thinly spread,
Last night, while by his dying fire, as closed
The day, in luxury my limbs reposed,
“ Here Penury oft from Misery's mount will guide
Even to the summer door his icy tide,
And here the avalanche of Death destroy
The little cottage of domestic joy.
But, ah! the unwilling mind may more than trace
The general sorrows of the human race:
The churlish gales, that unremitting blow
Cold from necessity's continual snow,
To us the gentle groups of bliss deny
That on the noon-day bank of leisure lie.
Yet more;—compelled by Powers which only deign
That *solitary* man disturb their reign,
Powers that support a never-ceasing strife
With all the tender charities of life,
The father, as his sons of strength become
To pay the filial debt, for food to roam,
From his bare nest amid the storms of heaven
Drives, eagle-like, those sons as he was driven;
His last dread pleasure watches to the plain—
And never, eagle-like, beholds again!”

When the poor heart has all its joys resigned,
Why does their sad remembrance cleave behind?
Lo! where through flat Batavia's willowy groves,
Or by the lazy Seine, the exile roves;
Soft o'er the waters mournful measures swell,
Unlocking tender thought's "memorial cell;"
Past pleasures are transform'd to mortal pains,
While poison spreads along the listener's veins,
Poison, which not a frame of steel can brave,
Bows his young head with sorrow to the grave.*

Gay lark of hope, thy silent song resume!
Fair smiling lights the purpled hills illumine!
Soft gales and dews of life's delicious morn,
And thou, lost fragrance of the heart, return!
Soon flies the little joy to man allowed,
And grief before him travels like a cloud:
For come Diseases on, and Penury's rage,
Labour, and Care, and Pain, and dismal Age,
Till, Hope-deserted, long in vain his breath
Implores the dreadful untried sleep of Death.
— 'Mid savage rocks, and seas of snow that shine
Between interminable tracts of pine,
A Temple stands, which holds an awful shrine,
By an uncertain light revealed, that falls
On the mute Image and the troubled walls:
Pale, dreadful faces round the Shrine appear,
Abortive Joy, and Hope that works in fear;
While strives a secret Power to hush the crowd,
Pain's wild rebellious burst proclaims her rights aloud.

* The effect of the famous air called in French Ranz des Vaches upon the Swiss troops.

Oh! give not me that eye of hard disdain
 That views undimmed Ensiedlen's* wretched fane.
 'Mid muttering prayers all sounds of torment meet,
 Dire clap of hands, distracted chafe of feet;
 While, loud and dull, ascends the weeping cry,
 Surely in other thoughts contempt may die.
 If the sad grave of human ignorance bear
 One flower of hope — oh, pass and leave it there!
 — The tall Sun, tiptoe on an Alpine spire,
 Flings o'er the wilderness a stream of fire;
 Now let us meet the Pilgrims ere the day
 Close on the remnant of their weary way;
 While they are drawing toward the sacred floor
 Where the charmed worm of pain shall gnaw no more.
 How gaily murmur and how sweetly taste
 The fountains † reared for them amid the waste!
 There some with tearful kiss each other greet,
 And some, with reverence, wash their toil-worn feet.
 Yes, I will see you when ye first behold
 Those holy turrets tipped with evening gold,
 In that glad moment when the hands are prest
 In mute devotion on the thankful breast.

Last let us turn to where Chamouny ‡ shields
 With rocks and gloomy woods her fertile fields:
 Five streams of ice amid her cots descend,
 And with wild flowers and blooming orchards blend;—

* This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief, by multitudes, from every corner of the Catholic world, labouring under mental or bodily afflictions.

† Rude fountains built and covered with sheds for the accommodation of the Pilgrims, in their ascent of the mountain.

‡ This word is pronounced upon the spot Châmouny: I have taken the liberty of changing the accent.

A scene more fair than what the Grecian feigns
Of purple lights and ever-vernal plains;
Here lawns and shades by breezy rivulets fanned,
Here all the Seasons revel hand in hand.
—Red stream the cottage-lights; the landscape fades,
Erroneous wavering 'mid the twilight shades.
Alone ascends that Hill of matchless height*,
That holds no commerce with the summer Night;
From age to age, amid his lonely bounds
The crash of ruin fitfully resounds;
Mysterious havoc! but serene his brow,
Where daylight lingers 'mid perpetual snow;
Glitter the stars above, and all is black below.

At such an hour I heaved a pensive sigh,
When roared the sullen Arve in anger by,
That not for thy reward, delicious Vale!
Waves the ripe harvest in the autumnal gale;
That thou, the slave of slaves, art doomed to pine;
Hard lot! — for no Italian arts are thine,
To soothe or cheer, to soften or refine.

Beloved Freedom! were it mine to stray,
With shrill winds roaring round my lonely way,
O'er the bleak sides of Cumbria's heath-clad moors,
Or where dank sea-weed lashes Scotland's shores;
To scent the sweets of Piedmont's breathing rose,
And orange gale that o'er Lugano blows;
In the wide range of many a varied round,
Fleet as my passage was, I still have found
That where despotic courts their gems display,
The lilies of domestic joy decay,

* It is only from the higher part of the valley of Chàmouny that Mont Blanc is visible.

While the remotest hamlets blessings share,
In thy dear presence known, and only there!
The casement's shed more luscious woodbine binds,
And to the door a neater pathway winds;
At early morn, the careful housewife, led
To cull her dinner from its garden bed,
Of weedless herbs a healthier prospect sees,
While hum with busier joy her happy bees;
In brighter rows her table wealth aspires,
And laugh with merrier blaze her evening fires;
Her infants' cheeks with fresher roses glow,
And wilder graces sport around their brow;
By clearer taper lit, a cleanlier board
Receives at supper hour her tempting hoard;
The chamber hearth with fresher boughs is spread,
And whiter is the hospitable bed.

And oh, fair France! though now along the shade,
Where erst at will the grey-clad peasant strayed,
Gleam war's discordant vestments through the trees,
And the red banner fluctuates in the breeze;
Though martial songs have banished songs of love,
And nightingales forsake the village grove,
Scared by the fife and rumbling drum's alarms,
And the short thunder, and the flash of arms;
While, as Night bids the startling uproar die,
Sole sound, the Sourd * renews his mournful cry!
— Yet, hast thou found that Freedom spreads her power
Beyond the cottage hearth, the cottage door:
All nature smiles, and owns beneath her eyes
Her fields peculiar, and peculiar skies.

* An insect so called, which emits a short, melancholy cry, heard at the close of the summer evenings, on the banks of the Loire.

Yes, as I roamed where Loiret's waters glide
Through rustling aspens heard from side to side,
When from October clouds a milder light
Fell, where the blue flood rippled into white,
Methought from every cot the watchful bird
Crowed with ear-piercing power till then unheard;
Each clacking mill, that broke the murmuring streams,
Rocked the charmed thought in more delightful dreams;
Chasing those long, long dreams, the falling leaf
Awoke a fainter pang of moral grief;
The measured echo of the distant flail
Wound in more welcome cadence down the vale;
A more majestic tide * the water rolled,
And glowed the sun-gilt groves in richer gold.
— Though Liberty shall soon, indignant, raise
Red on the hills his beacon's comet blaze;
Bid from on high his lonely cannon sound,
And on ten thousand hearths his shout rebound;
His larum-bell from village-tower to tower
Swing on the astounded ear its dull undying roar;
Yet, yet rejoice, though Pride's perverted ire
Rouse Hell's own aid, and wrap thy hills in fire!
Lo! from the innocuous flames, a lovely birth,
With its own Virtues springs another earth:
Nature, as in her prime, her virgin reign
Begins, and Love and Truth compose her train;
While, with a pulseless hand, and steadfast gaze,
Unbreathing Justice her still beam surveys.

Oh give, great God, to Freedom's waves to ride
Sublime o'er Conquest, Avarice, and Pride,

* The duties upon many parts of the French rivers were so exorbitant, that the poorer people, deprived of the benefit of water carriage, were obliged to transport their goods by land.

To sweep where Pleasure decks her guilty bowers,
And dark Oppression builds her thick-ribbed towers
— Give them, beneath their breast while gladness springs,
To brood the nations o'er with Nile-like wings;
And grant that every sceptred Child of clay,
Who cries, presumptuous, "Here their tides shall stay,"
Swept in their anger from the affrighted shore,
With all his creatures sink — to rise no more!

To-night, my friend, within this humble cot
Be the dead load of mortal ills forgot
In timely sleep; and, when at break of day,
On the tall peaks the glistening sunbeams play,
With lighter heart our course we may renew,
The first whose footsteps print the mountain dew.

IV.

X THE FEMALE VAGRANT.

My Father was a good and pious man,
An honest man by honest parents bred;
And I believe that, soon as I began
To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said:
And afterwards, by my good father taught,
I read, and loved the books in which I read;
For books in every neighbouring house I sought,
And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

Can I forget what charms did once adorn
My garden, stored with peas, and mint, and thyme,
And rose, and lily, for the sabbath morn?
The sabbath bells, and their delightful chime;

The gambols and wild freaks at shearing time;
My hen's rich nest through long grass scarce espied;
The cowslip-gathering in June's dewy prime;
The swans, that, when I sought the water-side,
From far to meet me came, spreading their snowy pride?

The staff I yet remember which upbore
The bending body of my active Sire;
His seat beneath the honeyed sycamore
Where the bees hummed, and chair by winter fire;
When market-morning came, the neat attire
With which, though bent on haste, myself I decked;
My watchful dog, whose starts of furious ire,
When stranger passed, so often I have checked;
The red-breast, known for years, which at my casement pecked.

The suns of twenty summers danced along, —
Ah! little marked how fast they rolled away:
But, through severe mischance, and cruel wrong,
My father's substance fell into decay:
We toiled, and struggled — hoping for a day
When Fortune should put on a kinder look;
But vain were wishes — efforts vain as they;
He from his old hereditary nook
Must part, — the summons came, — our final leave we took.

It was indeed a miserable hour
When, from the last hill-top, my sire surveyed,
Peering above the trees, the steeple tower
That on his marriage day sweet music made!
Till then, he hoped his bones might there be laid,
Close by my mother in their native bowers:
Bidding me trust in God, he stood and prayed, —
I could not pray: — through tears that fell in showers,
Glimmered our dear-loved home, alas! no longer ours!

There was a Youth whom I had loved so long,
That when I loved him not I cannot say:
'Mid the green mountains many a thoughtless song
We two had sung, like gladsome birds in May;
When we began to tire of childish play,
We seemed still more and more to prize each other;
We talked of marriage and our marriage day;
And I in truth did love him like a brother,
For never could I hope to meet with such another.

Two years were passed since to a distant town
He had repaired to ply the artist's trade,
What tears of bitter grief, till then unknown!
What tender vows our last sad kiss delayed!
To him we turned: — we had no other aid:
Like one revived, upon his neck I wept,
And her whom he had loved in joy, he said,
He well could love in grief; his faith he kept;
And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

We lived in peace and comfort; and were blest
With daily bread, by constant toil supplied.
Three lovely infants lay upon my breast;
And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sighed,
And knew not why. My happy Father died,
When sad distress reduced the children's meal:
Thrice happy! that for him the grave did hide
The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
And tears that flowed for ills which patience could not heal.

'Twas a hard change, an evil time was come;
We had no hope, and no relief could gain.
But soon, with proud parade, the noisy drum
Beat round, to sweep the streets of want and pain.

My husband's arms now only served to strain
Me and his children hungering in his view ;
In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain :
To join those miserable men he flew ;
And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more, we drew.

There long were we neglected, and we bore
Much sorrow, ere the fleet its anchor weighed ;
Green fields before us, and our native shore,
We breathed a pestilential air, that made
Ravage for which no knell was heard. We prayed
For our departure ; wished and wished — nor knew
'Mid that long sickness, and those hopes delayed,
That happier days we never more must view :
The parting signal streamed, at last the land withdrew.

But the calm summer season now was past.
On as we drove, the equinoctial deep
Ran mountains-high before the howling blast ;
And many perished in the whirlwind's sweep.
We gazed with terror on their gloomy sleep,
Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue,
Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
That we the mercy of the waves should rue :
We reached the western world, a poor, devoted crew.

The pains and plagues that on our heads came down,
Disease and famine, agony and fear,
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would thy brain unsettle even to hear.
All perished — all, in one remorseless year,
Husband and Children ! one by one, by sword
And ravenous plague, all perished : every tear
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored.

Peaceful as some immeasurable plain
By the first beams of dawning light imprest,
In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main.
The very ocean hath its hour of rest.
I too forgot the heavings of my breast.
Oh me, how quiet sky and ocean were !
As quiet all within me. I was blest !
And looked, and looked along the silent air
Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair.

Ah ! how unlike those late terrific sleeps,
And groans, that rage of racking famine spoke !
The unburied dead that lay in festering heaps !
The breathing pestilence that rose like smoke !
The shriek that from the distant battle broke !
The mine's dire earthquake, and the pallid host
Driven by the bomb's incessant thunder-stroke
To loathsome vaults, where heart-sick anguish tossed,
Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost !

Some mighty gulf of separation past,
I seemed transported to another world : —
A thought resigned with pain, when from the mast
The impatient mariner the sail unfurled,
And, whistling, called the wind that hardly curled
The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home
And from all hope I was for ever hurled.
For me — farthest from earthly port to roam
Was best, could I but shun the spot where man might come.

And oft I thought (my fancy was so strong)
That I, at last, a resting-place had found ;
“ Here will I dwell,” said I, “ my whole life long,
Roaming the illimitable waters round :

Here will I live, — of every friend disowned, —
And end my days upon the ocean flood." —
To break my dream the vessel reached its bound :
And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food.

By grief enfeebled, was I turned adrift,
Helpless as sailor cast on desert rock ;
Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
Nor dared my hand at any door to knock.
I lay where, with his drowsy Mates, the Cock
From the cross timber of an out-house hung :
Dismally tolled, that night, the city clock !
At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung,
Nor to the beggar's language could I fit my tongue.

So passed another day, and so the third ;
Then did I try in vain the crowd's resort.
— In deep despair, by frightful wishes stirred,
Near the sea-side I reached a ruined Fort ;
There, pains which nature could no more support,
With blindness linked, did on my vitals fall,
And after many interruptions short
Of hideous sense, I sank, nor step could crawl ;
Unsought for was the help that did my life recall.

Borne to an hospital, I lay with brain
Drowsy and weak, and shattered memory ;
I heard my neighbours, in their beds, complain
Of many things which never troubled me ;
Of feet still bustling round with busy glee ;
Of looks where common kindness had no part ;
Of service done with careless cruelty,
Fretting the fever round the languid heart ;
And groans which, as they said, might make a dead man start.

These things just served to stir the torpid sense,
Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
With strength did memory return; and, thence
Dismissed, again on open day I gazed,
At houses, men, and common light amazed.
The lanes I sought, and, as the sun retired,
Came where beneath the trees a faggot blazed;
The Travellers saw me weep, my fate enquired,
And gave me food, — and rest, more welcome, more desired.

They, with their panniered Asses, semblance made
Of Potters wandering on from door to door;
But life of happier sort to me portrayed,
And other joys my fancy to allure;
The bag-pipe, dinning on the midnight moor,
In barn uplighted; and companions boon
Well met from far with revelry secure,
Among the forest glades, when jocund June
Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.

But ill they suited me — those journeys dark
O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch!
To charm the surly House-dog's faithful bark,
Or hang on tiptoe at the lifted latch.
The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill,
And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill:
Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brooding still

What could I do, unaided and unblest?
My Father! gone was every friend of thine:
And kindred of dead husband are at best
Small help; and, after marriage such as mine,

With little kindness would to me incline.
Ill was I then for toil or service fit:
With tears whose course no effort could confine,
By the road-side forgetful would I sit
Whole hours, my idle arms in moping sorrow knit.

I led a wandering life among the fields;
Contentedly, yet sometimes self-accused,
I lived upon what casual bounty yields,
Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
The ground I for my bed have often used:
But, what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth
Is, that I have my inner self abused,
Forgone the home delight of constant truth,
And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth.

Three years thus wandering, often have I viewed,
In tears, the sun towards that country tend
Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude;
And now across this moor my steps I bend —
Oh! tell me whither — for no earthly friend
Have I." — She ceased, and weeping turned away; —
As if because her tale was at an end
She wept; — because she had no more to say
Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay.

THE BROTHERS.

POEMS

FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS.

I.

THE BROTHERS.*

"THESE Tourists, Heaven preserve us! needs must live
 A profitable life: some glance along,
 Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
 And they were butterflies to wheel about
 Long as the summer lasted: some, as wise,
 Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
 Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,
 Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,
 Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
 Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn.
 But, for that moping Son of Idleness,
 Why can he tarry *yonder*? — In our church-yard
 Is neither epitaph nor monument,
 Tombstone nor name — only the turf we tread
 And a few natural graves." To Jane, his wife,
 Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.
 It was a July evening; and he sate
 Upon the long stone-seat beneath the eaves
 Of his old cottage, — as it chanced, that day,
 Employed in winter's work. Upon the stone
 His Wife sate near him, teasing matted wool,
 While, from the twin cards toothed with glittering wire,
 He fed the spindle of his youngest Child,
 Who turned her large round wheel in the open air
 With back and forward steps. Towards the field
 In which the Parish Chapel stood alone,

* This Poem was intended to conclude a series of pastorals, the scene of which was laid among the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland. I mention this to apologise for the abruptness with which the poem begins.

Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent
Many a long look of wonder : and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snow-white ridge
Of carded wool which the old man had piled
He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other locked ; and, down the path
That from his cottage to the church-yard led,
He took his way, impatient to accost
The Stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.

'Twas one well known to him in former days,
A Shepherd-lad ; — who ere his sixteenth year
Had left that calling, tempted to entrust
His expectations to the fickle winds
And perilous waters, — with the mariners
A fellow mariner, — and so had fared
Through twenty seasons ; but he had been reared
Among the mountains, and he in his heart
Was half a Shepherd on the stormy seas.
Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
Of caves and trees : — and, when the regular wind
Between the tropics filled the steady sail,
And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,
Lengthening invisibly its weary line
Along the cloudless Main, he, in those hours
Of tiresome indolence, would often hang
Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze ;
And, while the broad green wave and sparkling foam
Flashed round him images and hues that wrought
In union with the employment of his heart,
He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,

Below him, in the bosom of the deep,
Saw mountains, — saw the forms of sheep that grazed
On verdant hills — with dwellings among trees,
And shepherds clad in the same country gray
Which he himself had worn.*

And now, at last,
From perils manifold, with some small wealth
Acquired by traffic 'mid the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is returned,
With a determined purpose to resume
The life he had lived there ; both for the sake
Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne
In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother Shepherds on their native hills.
— They were the last of all their race : and now,
When Leonard had approached his home, his heart
Failed in him ; and, not venturing to enquire
Tidings of one whom he so dearly loved,
Towards the church-yard he had turned aside ;
That, as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might learn
If still his Brother lived, or to the file
Another grave was added. — He had found
Another grave, — near which a full half-hour
He had remained ; but, as he gazed, there grew
Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt ; and hope was his
That he had seen this heap of turf before, —
That it was not another grave ; but one

* This description of the Calenture is sketched from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose, by Mr. Gilbert, author of *The Hurricane*.

He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale, that afternoon, he walked
Through fields which once had been well known to him :
And oh what joy the recollection now
Sent to his heart ! He lifted up his eyes,
And, looking round, imagined that he saw
Strange alteration wrought on every side
Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks,
And everlasting hills themselves were changed.

By this the Priest, who down the field had come,
Unseen by Leonard, at the church-yard gate
Stopped short, — and thence, at leisure, limb by limb
Perused him with a gay complacency.
Ay, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
'Tis one of those who needs must leave the path
Of the world's business to go wild alone :
His arms have a perpetual holiday ;
The happy man will creep about the fields,
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write Fool upon his forehead. Planted thus
Beneath a shed that over-arched the gate
Of this rude church-yard, till the stars appeared
The good Man might have communed with himself,
But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,
Approached ; he recognised the Priest at once,
And, after greetings interchanged, and given
By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued.

LEONARD.

You live, Sir, in these dales, a quiet life :
Your years make up one peaceful family ;

And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come
 And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
 They cannot be remembered? Scarce a funeral
 Comes to this church-yard once in eighteen months;
 And yet, some changes must take place among you:
 And you, who dwell here, even among these rocks,
 Can trace the finger of mortality,
 And see, that with our threescore years and ten
 We are not all that perish. — I remember,
 (For many years ago I passed this road)
 There was a foot-way all along the fields
 By the brook-side — 'tis gone — and that dark cleft!
 To me it does not seem to wear the face
 Which then it had.

PRIEST.

Nay, Sir, for aught I know,
 That chasm is much the same —

LEONARD.

But, surely, yonder —

PRIEST.

Ay, there, indeed, your memory is a friend
 That does not play you false. — On that tall pike
 (It is the loneliest place of all these hills)
 There were two Springs which bubbled side by side,
 As if they had been made that they might be
 Companions for each other: the huge crag
 Was rent with lightning — one hath disappeared;
 The other, left behind, is flowing still.*
 For accidents and changes such as these,
 We want not store of them; — a water-spout
 Will bring down half a mountain; what a feast

* This actually took place upon Kidstow Pike at the head of Hawes-water.

For folks that wander up and down like you,
 To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
 One roaring cataract! — a sharp May-storm
 Will come with loads of January snow,
 And in one night send twenty score of sheep
 To feed the ravens; or a Shepherd dies
 By some untoward death among the rocks:
 The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge —
 A wood is felled: — and then for our own homes!
 A Child is born or christened, a Field ploughed,
 A Daughter sent to service, a Web spun,
 The old House-clock is decked with a new face;
 And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
 To chronicle the time, we all have here
 A pair of diaries, — one serving, Sir,
 For the whole dale, and one for each fire-side —
 Yours was a stranger's judgment: for Historians,
 Commend me to these valleys!

LEONARD.

Yet your Church-yard
 Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
 To say that you are heedless of the past:
 An orphan could not find his mother's grave:
 Here's neither head nor foot-stone, plate of brass,
 Cross-bones nor skull, — type of our earthly state
 Nor emblem of our hopes: the dead man's home
 Is but a fellow to that pasture-field.

PRIEST.

Why, there, Sir, is a thought that's new to me!
 The Stone-cutters, 'tis true, might beg their bread
 If every English Church-yard were like ours;
 Yet your conclusion wanders from the truth:
 We have no need of names and epitaphs;
 We talk about the dead by our fire-sides.

And then, for our immortal part! *we* want
No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale:
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains.

LEONARD.

Your Dalesmen, then, do in each other's thoughts
Possess a kind of second life: no doubt
You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these Graves?

PRIEST.

For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might; and, on a winter-evening,
If you were seated at my chimney's nook,
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.
Now there's a grave — your foot is half upon it, —
It looks just like the rest; and yet that Man
Died broken-hearted.

LEONARD.

'Tis a common case.

We'll take another: who is he that lies
Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three graves?
It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the church-yard wall.

PRIEST.

That's Walter Ewbank.

He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
As ever were produced by youth and age
Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
Through five long generations had the heart
Of Walter's forefathers o'erflowed the bounds
Of their inheritance, that single cottage —

You see it yonder! — and those few green fields.
They toiled and wrought, and still, from Sire to Son,
Each struggled, and each yielded as before
A little — yet a little — and old Walter,
They left to him the family heart, and land
With other burthens than the crop it bore.
Year after year the old man still kept up
A cheerful mind, — and buffeted with bond,
Interest, and mortgages; at last he sank,
And went into his grave before his time.
Poor Walter! whether it was care that spurred him
God only knows, but to the very last
He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale:
His pace was never that of an old man:
I almost see him tripping down the path
With his two Grandsons after him: — but You,
Unless our Landlord be your host to-night,
Have far to travel, — and on these rough paths
Even in the longest day of midsummer —

LEONARD.

But those two Orphans!

PRIEST.

Orphans! — Such they were —
Yet not while Walter lived: — for, though their parents
Lay buried side by side as now they lie,
The old Man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father: and if tears,
Shed when he talked of them where they were not,
And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
This old Man, in the day of his old age,
Was half a mother to them. — If you weep, Sir,
To hear a Stranger talking about Strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among your kindred!

Ay — you may turn that way — it is a grave
Which will bear looking at.

LEONARD.

These Boys — I hope
They loved this good old Man? —

PRIEST.

They did — and truly:
But that was what we almost overlooked,
They were such darlings of each other. For,
Though from their cradles they had lived with Walter,
The only Kinsman near them, and though he
Inclined to them by reason of his age,
With a more fond, familiar tenderness,
They, notwithstanding, had much love to spare,
And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder by just eighteen months,
Was two years taller: 'twas a joy to see,
To hear, to meet them! — From their house the School
Is distant three short miles — and in the time
Of storm and thaw, when every water-course
And unbridged stream, such as you may have noticed
Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
Was swoln into a noisy rivulet,
Would Leonard then, when elder boys perhaps
Remained at home, go staggering through the fords,
Bearing his Brother on his back. I have seen him,
On windy days, in one of those stray brooks,
Ay, more than once I have seen him, mid-leg deep,
Their two books lying both on a dry stone,
Upon the hither side: and once I said,
As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which we all of us were born,
That God who made the great book of the world
Would bless such piety —

LEONARD.

It may be then —

PRIEST.

Never did worthier lads break English bread;
The finest Sunday that the Autumn saw
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
Could never keep these boys away from church,
Or tempt them to an hour of sabbath breach.
Leonard and James! I warrant, every corner
Among these rocks, and every hollow place
Where foot could come, to one or both of them
Was known as well as to the flowers that grow there.
Like Roe-bucks they went bounding o'er the hills;
They played like two young Ravens on the crags:
Then they could write, ay and speak too, as well
As many of their betters — and for Leonard!
The very night before he went away,
In my own house I put into his hand
A Bible, and I'd wager house and field
That, if he is alive, he has it yet.

LEONARD.

It seems, these Brothers have not lived to be
A comfort to each other —

PRIEST.

That they might
Live to such end, is what both old and young
In this our valley all of us have wished,
And what, for my part, I have often prayed:
But Leonard —

LEONARD.

Then James still is left among you?

PRIEST.

'Tis of the elder Brother I am speaking:
They had an Uncle; — he was at that time

A thriving man, and trafficked on the seas:
And, but for that same Uncle, to this hour
Leonard had never handled rope or shroud:
For the Boy loved the life which we lead here;
And though of unripe years, a stripling only,
His soul was knit to this his native soil.
But, as I said, old Walter was too weak
To strive with such a torrent; when he died,
The Estate and House were sold; and all their Sheep,
A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,
Had clothed the Ewbanks for a thousand years: —
Well — all was gone, and they were destitute.
And Leonard, chiefly for his Brother's sake,
Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.
Twelve years are past since we had tidings from him.
If there were one among us who had heard
That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,
From the great Gavel*, down by Leeza's Banks,
And down the Enna, far as Egremont,
The day would be a very festival;
And those two bells of ours, which there you see —
Hanging in the open air — but, O good Sir!
This is sad talk — they'll never sound for him —
Living or dead. — When last we heard of him,
He was in slavery among the Moors
Upon the Barbary Coast. — 'Twas not a little
That would bring down his spirit; and no doubt,
Before it ended in his death, the Youth

* The Great Gavel, so called, I imagine, from its resemblance to the Gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale, and Borrowdale.

The Leeza is a river which flows into the Lake of Ennerdale: on issuing from the Lake, it changes its name, and is called the End, Eyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont.

Was sadly crossed — Poor Leonard! when we parted,
He took me by the hand, and said to me,
If e'er he should grow rich, he would return,
To live in peace upon his Father's Land,
And lay his bones among us.

LEONARD.

If that day
Should come, 't would needs be a glad day for him;
He would himself, no doubt, be happy then
As any that should meet him —

PRIEST.

Happy! Sir —

LEONARD.

You said his kindred all were in their graves,
And that he had one Brother —

PRIEST.

That is but
A fellow tale of sorrow. From his youth
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate;
And Leonard being always by his side
Had done so many offices about him,
That, though he was not of a timid nature,
Yet still the spirit of a Mountain Boy
In him was somewhat checked; and, when his Brother
Was gone to sea, and he was left alone,
The little colour that he had was soon
Stolen from his cheek; he drooped, and pined, and pined —

LEONARD.

But these are all the graves of full-grown men!

PRIEST.

Ay, Sir, that passed away: we took him to us;
He was the Child of all the dale — he lived
Three months with one, and six months with another;
And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love:

And many, many happy days were his.
 But, whether blithe or sad, 'tis my belief
 His absent Brother still was at his heart.
 And, when he dwelt beneath our roof, we found
 (A practice till this time unknown to him)
 That often, rising from his bed at night,
 He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping
 He sought his Brother Leonard. — You are moved!
 Forgive me, Sir: before I spoke to you,
 I judged you most unkindly.

LEONARD.

But this Youth,
 How did he die at last?

PRIEST.

One sweet May morning,
 (It will be twelve years since when Spring returns)
 He had gone forth among the new-dropped lambs,
 With two or three Companions, whom their course
 Of occupation led from height to height
 Under a cloudless sun, till he, at length,
 Through weariness, or, haply, to indulge
 The humour of the moment, lagged behind.
 You see yon precipice; — it wears the shape
 Of a vast building made of many crags;
 And in the midst is one particular rock
 That rises like a column from the vale,
 Whence by our shepherds it is called THE PILLAR.
 Upon its aëry summit crowned with heath,
 The Loiterer, not unnoticed by his Comrades,
 Lay stretched at ease; but, passing by the place
 On their return, they found that he was gone.
 No ill was feared; but one of them by chance
 Entering, when evening was far spent, the house

Which at that time was James's home, there learned
That nobody had seen him all that day:
The morning came, and still he was unheard of:
The neighbours were alarmed, and to the Brook
Some hastened, some towards the Lake: ere noon
They found him at the foot of that same Rock
Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third day after
I buried him, poor Youth, and there he lies!

LEONARD.

And that then is his grave! — Before his death
You say that he saw many happy years?

PRIEST.

Ay, that he did —

LEONARD.

And all went well with him? —

PRIEST.

If he had one, the youth had twenty homes.

LEONARD.

And you believe, then, that his mind was easy? —

PRIEST.

Yes, long before he died, he found that time
Is a true friend to sorrow; and unless
His thoughts were turned on Leonard's luckless fortune,
He talked about him with a cheerful love.

LEONARD.

He could not come to an unhallowed end!

PRIEST.

Nay, God forbid! — You recollect I mentioned
A habit which disquietude and grief
Had brought upon him; and we all conjectured
That, as the day was warm, he had lain down
Upon the grass, — and waiting for his comrades,
He there had fallen asleep; that in his sleep

He to the margin of the precipice
Had walked, and from the summit had fallen headlong.
And so, no doubt, he perished: at the time,
We guess, that in his hand he must have held
His Shepherd's staff; for midway in the cliff
It had been caught; and there for many years
It hung — and mouldered there.

The Priest here ended —

The Stranger would have thanked him, but he felt
A gushing from his heart, that took away
The power of speech. Both left the spot in silence;
And Leonard, when they reached the church-yard gate,
As the Priest lifted up the latch turned round, —
And, looking at the grave, he said, “ My Brother!”
The Vicar did not hear the words: and now,
Pointing towards the Cottage, he entreated
That Leonard would partake his homely fare:
The Other thanked him with a fervent voice;
But added, that, the evening being calm,
He would pursue his journey. So they parted.
It was not long ere Leonard reached a grove
That overhung the road: he there stopped short,
And, sitting down beneath the trees, reviewed
All that the Priest had said: his early years
Were with him in his heart: his cherished hopes,
And thoughts which had been his an hour before,
All pressed on him with such a weight, that now,
This vale, where he had been so happy, seemed
A place in which he could not bear to live:
So he relinquished all his purposes.
He travelled on to Egremont: and thence,
That night, he wrote a letter to the Priest,

Reminding him of what had passed between them;
And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
That it was from the weakness of his heart
He had not dared to tell him who he was.

This done, he went on shipboard, and is now
A Seaman, a grey-headed Mariner.

II.

ARTEGAL AND ELIDURE.

(SEE THE CHRONICLE OF GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH, AND MILTON'S
HISTORY OF ENGLAND.)

WHERE be the Temples which, in Britain's Isle,
For his paternal Gods, the Trojan raised?
Gone like a morning dream, or like a pile
Of clouds that in cerulean ether blazed! —
Ere Julius landed on her white-cliffed shore,
They sank, delivered o'er
To fatal dissolution; and, I ween,
No vestige then was left that such had ever been.

Nathless, a British record (long concealed
In old Armorica, whose secret springs
No Gothic conqueror ever drank) revealed
The wondrous current of forgotten things;
How Brutus came, by oracles impelled,
And Albion's giants quelled —

A brood whom no civility could melt,
“Who never tasted grace, and goodness ne'er had felt.”

By brave Corineus aided, he subdued,
And rooted out the intolerable kind;
And this too-long-polluted land imbued
With goodly arts and usages refined;
Whence golden harvests, cities, warlike towers,
And Pleasure's sumptuous bowers;
Whence all the fixed delights of house and home,
Friendships that will not break, and love that cannot roam.

O, happy Britain! region all too fair
For self-delighting fancy to endure
That silence only should inhabit there,
Wild beasts, or uncouth savages impure!
But, intermingled with the generous seed,
Grew many a poisonous weed;
Thus fares it still with all that takes its birth
From human care, or grows upon the breast of earth.

Hence, and how soon! that war of vengeance waged
By Guendolen against her faithless lord;
Till she, in jealous fury unassuaged,
Had slain his Paramour with ruthless sword:
Then, into Severn hideously defiled,
She flung her blameless child,
Sabrina — vowing that the stream should bear
That name through every age, her hatred to declare.

So speaks the Chronicle, and tells of Lear
By his ungrateful daughters turned adrift.
Ye lightnings, hear his voice! — they cannot hear,
Nor can the winds restore his simple gift.
But One there is, a Child of nature meek,
Who comes her Sire to seek;

And he, recovering sense, upon her breast
Leans smilingly, and sinks into a perfect rest.

There too we read of Spenser's fairy themes,
And those that Milton loved in youthful years;
The sage enchanter Merlin's subtle schemes;
The feats of Arthur and his knightly peers;
Of Arthur, — who, to upper light restored,
 With that terrific sword
Which yet he wields in subterranean war,
Shall lift his country's fame above the polar star!

What wonder, then, if in such ample field
Of old tradition, one particular flower
Doth seemingly in vain its fragrance yield,
And bloom unnoticed even to this late hour?
Now, gentle Muses, your assistance grant,
 While I this flower transplant
Into a garden stored with Poesy;
Where flowers and herbs unite, and haply some weeds be,
'That, wanting not wild grace, are from all mischief free!

A KING more worthy of respect and love
Than wise Gorbonian ruled not in his day;
And grateful Britain prospered far above
All neighbouring countries through his righteous sway;
He poured rewards and honours on the good;
 The Oppressor he withstood;
And while he served the gods with reverence due
Fields smiled, and temples rose, and towns and cities grew.

He died, whom Artegal succeeds — his son;
But how unworthy of such sire was he!
A hopeful reign, auspiciously begun,
Was darkened soon by foul iniquity.
From crime to crime he mounted, till at length
The nobles leagued their strength
With a vexed people, and the tyrant chased;
And, on the vacant throne, his worthier Brother placed.

From realm to realm the humbled Exile went,
Suppliant for aid his kingdom to regain;
In many a court, and many a warrior's tent,
He urged his persevering suit in vain.
Him, in whose wretched heart ambition failed,
Dire poverty assailed;
And, tired with slights which he no more could brook,
Towards his native soil he cast a longing look.

Fair blew the wished-for wind — the voyage sped;
He landed; and, by many dangers scared,
“Poorly provided, poorly followèd,”
To Calaterium's forest he repaired.
How changed from him who, born to highest place,
Had swayed the royal mace,
Flattered and feared, despised yet deified,
In Troynovant, his seat by silver Thames's side!

From that wild region where the crownless king
Lay in concealment with his scanty train,
Supporting life by water from the spring,
And such chance food as outlaws can obtain,
Unto the few whom he esteems his friends
A messenger he sends;
And from their secret loyalty requires
Shelter and daily bread, — the amount of his desires.

While he the issue waits, at early morn
Wandering by stealth abroad, he chanced to hear
A startling outcry made by hound and horn,
From which the tusky boar hath fled in fear;
And, scouring toward him o'er the grassy plain,
Behold the hunter train!

He bids his little company advance
With seeming unconcern and steady countenance.

The royal Elidure, who leads the chase,
Hath checked his foaming courser — Can it be!
Methinks that I should recognise that face,
Though much disguised by long adversity!
He gazed rejoicing, and again he gazed,
Confounded and amazed —

“It is the king, my brother!” and, by sound
Of his own voice confirmed, he leaps upon the ground.

Long, strict, and tender was the embrace he gave,
Feebly returned by daunted Artegai;
Whose natural affection doubts enslave,
And apprehensions dark and criminal.
Loth to restrain the moving interview,
The attendant lords withdrew;
And, while they stood upon the plain apart,
Thus Elidure, by words, relieved his struggling heart.

“By heavenly Powers conducted, we have met;
— O Brother! to my knowledge lost so long,
But neither lost to love, nor to regret,
Nor to my wishes lost; — forgive the wrong,
(Such it may seem) if I thy crown have borne,
Thy royal mantle worn:

I was their natural guardian; and 'tis just
That now I should restore what hath been held in trust.”

A while the astonished Artegal stood mute,
Then thus exclaimed — “To me, of titles shorn,
And stripped of power! — me, feeble, destitute,
To me a kingdom! — spare the bitter scorn!
If justice ruled the breast of foreign kings,
Then, on the wide-spread wings
Of war, had I returned to claim my right;
This will I here avow, not dreading thy despite.”

“I do not blame thee,” Elidure replied;
“But, if my looks did with my words agree,
I should at once be trusted, not defied,
And thou from all disquietude be free.
May the unsullied Goddess of the chase,
Who to this blessed place
At this blest moment led me, if I speak
With insincere intent, on me her vengeance wreak!

“Were this same spear, which in my hand I grasp,
The British sceptre, here would I to thee
The symbol yield; and would undo this clasp,
If it confined the robe of sovereignty.
Odious to me the pomp of regal court,
And joyless sylvan sport,
While thou art roving, wretched and forlorn,
Thy couch the dewy earth, thy roof the forest thorn!”

Then Artegal thus spake — “I only sought,
Within this realm a place of safe retreat;
Beware of rousing an ambitious thought;
Beware of kindling hopes, for me unmeet!
Thou art reputed wise, but in my mind
Art pitiably blind;
Full soon this generous purpose thou mayst rue,
When that which has been done no wishes can undo.

“ Who, when a crown is fixed upon his head,
Would balance claim with claim, and right with right?
But thou — I know not how inspired, how led —
Wouldst change the course of things in all men’s sight!
And this for one who cannot imitate

Thy virtue, who may hate:
For, if, by such strange sacrifice restored,
He reign, thou still must be his king, and sovereign lord.

“ Lifted in magnanimity above
Aught that my feeble nature could perform,
Or even conceive; surpassing me in love
Far as in power the eagle doth the worm;
I, Brother! only should be king in name,
And govern to my shame;
A shadow in a hated land, while all
Of glad or willing service to thy share would fall.”

“ Believe it not,” said Elidure; “ respect
Awaits on virtuous life, and ever most
Attends on goodness with dominion decked,
Which stands the universal empire’s boast;
This can thy own experience testify:
Nor shall thy foes deny
That, in the gracious opening of thy reign,
Our Father’s spirit seemed in thee to breathe again.

“ And what if o’er that bright unbosoming
Clouds of disgrace and envious fortune past!
Have we not seen the glories of the spring
By veil of noontide darkness overcast?
The frith that glittered like a warrior’s shield,
The sky, the gay green field,
Are vanished; — gladness ceases in the groves,
And trepidation strikes the blackened mountain coves.

“ But is that gloom dissolved? how passing clear
Seems the wide world — far brighter than before!
Even so thy latent worth will re-appear,
Gladdening the people’s heart from shore to shore;
For youthful faults ripe virtues shall atone;
 Re-seated on thy throne,
Proof shalt thou furnish that misfortune, pain,
And sorrow, have confirmed thy native right to reign.

“ But, not to overlook what thou mayst know,
Thy enemies are neither weak nor few;
And circumspect must be our course, and slow,
Or from my purpose ruin may ensue.
Dismiss thy followers; — let them calmly wait
 Such change in thy estate
As I already have in thought devised;
And which, with caution due, may soon be realised.”

The Story tells what courses were pursued,
Until King Elidure, with full consent
Of all his Peers, before the multitude,
Rose, — and, to consummate this just intent,
Did place upon his Brother’s head the Crown,
 Relinquished by his own;
Then to his people cried, “ Receive your Lord,
Gorbonian’s first-born Son, your rightful King restored!”

The People answered with a loud acclaim:
Yet more; — heart-smitten by the heroic deed,
The reinstated Artegal became
Earth’s noblest penitent; from bondage freed
Of vice — thenceforth unable to subvert
 Or shake his high desert.

Long did he reign; and, when he died, the tear
Of universal grief bedewed his honoured bier.

Thus was a Brother by a Brother saved;
With whom a Crown (temptation that hath set
Discord in hearts of men till they have braved
Their nearest kin with deadly purpose met)
'Gainst duty weighed, and faithful love, did seem
A thing of no esteem;
And, from this triumph of affection pure,
He bore the lasting name of "pious Elidure!"

III.

THE SPARROW'S NEST.

BEHOLD, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid!
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started — seeming to espy
The home and sheltered bed,
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My Father's House, in wet or dry,
My Sister Emmeline and I
Together visited.

She looked at it as if she feared it;
Still wishing, dreading, to be near it:
Such heart was in her, being then
A little Prattler among men.
The Blessing of my later years
Was with me when a Boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy.

IV.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

I've watched you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless! — not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of Orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song;
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

V.

A FAREWELL.

COMPOSED IN THE YEAR 1802.

FAREWELL, thou little Nook of mountain-ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent Temple which doth bound
One side of our whole Vale with grandeur rare;
Sweet Garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that Man hath ever found,
Farewell! — we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care
Thee, and the Cottage which thou dost surround.

Our boat is safely anchored by the shore,
And safely will she ride when we are gone;
The flowering shrubs that decorate our door
Will prosper, though untended and alone:
Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none:
These narrow bounds contain our private store
Of things earth makes, and sun doth shine upon;
Here are they in our sight — we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell!
For two months now in vain we shall be sought;
We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought;
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,
Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell!
Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought,
And placed together near our rocky Well.

We go for One to whom ye will be dear ;
And she will prize this Bower, this Indian shed,
Our own contrivance, Building without peer !
— A gentle Maid, whose heart is lowly bred,
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gatherèd,
With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer,
Will come to you, — to you herself will wed, —
And love the blessed life that we lead here.

Dear Spot! which we have watched with tender heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed,
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,
Making all kindness registered and known ;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's Child indeed,
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And O most constant, yet most fickle Place,
That hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost show
To them who look not daily on thy face ;
Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,
And sayest, when we forsake thee, " Let them go !"
Thou easy-hearted Thing, with thy wild race
Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,
And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell her tales of years gone by,
And this sweet spring, the best beloved and best ;
Joy will be flown in its mortality ;
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.
Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's breast
Glittered at evening like a starry sky ;
And in this Bush our Sparrow built her nest,
Of which I sang one Song that will not die.

O happy Garden! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours;
And to soft slumbers, that did gently steep
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers,
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers;
Two burning months let summer overleap,
And, coming back with Her who will be ours,
Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

VI.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN MY POCKET-COPY OF THOMSON'S CASTLE OF
INDOLENCE.

WITHIN our happy Castle there dwelt One
Whom without blame I may not overlook;
For never sun on living creature shone
Who more devout enjoyment with us took:
Here on his hours he hung as on a book;
On his own time here would he float away,
As doth a fly upon a summer brook;
But go to-morrow — or belike to-day —
Seek for him, — he is fled; and whither none can say.

Thus often would he leave our peaceful home,
And find elsewhere his business or delight;
Out of our Valley's limits did he roam:
Full many a time, upon a stormy night,
His voice came to us from the neighbouring height:

Oft did we see him driving full in view
At mid-day when the sun was shining bright ;
What ill was on him, what he had to do,
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew.

Ah ! piteous sight it was to see this Man
When he came back to us, a withered flower,—
Or like a sinful creature, pale and wan.
Down would he sit ; and without strength or power
Look at the common grass from hour to hour :
And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,
Where apple-trees in blossom made a bower,
Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay ;
And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away.

Great wonder to our gentle Tribe it was
Whenever from our Valley he withdrew ;
For happier soul no living creature has
Than he had, being here the long day through.
Some thought he was a lover, and did woo :
Some thought far worse of him, and judged him wrong :
But Verse was what he had been wedded to ;
And his own mind did like a tempest strong
Come to him thus, and drove the weary Wight along.

With him there often walked in friendly guise,
Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,
A noticeable man with large grey eyes,
And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly
As if a blooming face it ought to be ;
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear
Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy ;
Profound his forehead was, though not severe ;
Yet some did think that he had little business here :

Sweet heaven forefend! his was a lawful right;
Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy;
His limbs would toss about him with delight
Like branches when strong winds the trees annoy.
Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy
To banish listlessness and irksome care;
He would have taught you how you might employ
Yourself; and many did to him repair, —
And certes not in vain; he had inventions rare.

Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried:
Long blades of grass, plucked round him as he lay,
Made — to his ear attentively applied —
A Pipe on which the wind would deftly play;
Glasses he had, that little things display,
The beetle panoplied in gems and gold,
A mailed angel on a battle day;
The mysteries that cups of flowers enfold,
And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do behold.

He would entice that other Man to hear
His music, and to view his imagery:
And, sooth, these two did love each other dear,
As far as love in such a place could be;
There did they dwell — from earthly labour free,
As happy spirits as were ever seen;
If but a bird, to keep them company,
Or butterfly sate down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a Maiden Queen.

VII.

LOUISA.

I MET Louisa in the shade;
And, having seen that lovely Maid,
Why should I fear to say
That she is ruddy, fleet, and strong;
And down the rocks can leap along,
Like rivulets in May?

And she hath smiles to earth unknown;
Smiles, that with motion of their own
Do spread, and sink, and rise;
That come and go with endless play,
And ever, as they pass away,
Are hidden in her eyes.

She loves her fire, her Cottage-home;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak;
And, when against the wind she strains,
Oh! might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek.

Take all that's mine "beneath the moon,"
If I with her but half a noon
May sit beneath the walls
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook
To hunt the waterfalls.

VIII.

STRANGE fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befel.

When she I loved was strong and gay,
And like a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath the evening Moon.

Upon the Moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea;
My Horse trudged on — and we drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard plot;
And, as we climbed the hill,
Towards the roof of Lucy's cot
The Moon descended still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending Moon.

My Horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright Moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
 Into a Lover's head! —
 "O mercy!" to myself I cried,
 "If Lucy should be dead!"

 IX.

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
 Beside the springs of Dove,
 A Maid whom there were none to praise
 And very few to love:

A Violet by a mossy stone
 Half hidden from the eye!
 — Fair as a star, when only one
 Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
 When Lucy ceased to be;
 But she is in her Grave, and, oh,
 The difference to me!

 X.

I TRAVELLED among unknown Men,
 In Lands beyond the Sea;
 Nor, England! did I know till then
 What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
 Nor will I quit thy shore
 A second time; for still I seem
 To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
 The joy of my desire;
 And she I cherished turned her wheel
 Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
 The bowers where Lucy played;
 And thine is too the last green field
 That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

XI.

ERE with cold beads of midnight dew
 Had mingled tears of thine,
 I grieved, fond Youth! that thou shouldst sue
 To haughty Geraldine.

Immoveable by generous sighs,
 She glories in a train
 Who drag, beneath our native skies,
 An oriental Chain.

Pine not like them with arms across,
 Forgetting in thy care
 How the fast-rooted trees can toss
 Their branches in mid air.

The humblest Rivulet will take
 Its own wild liberties;
 And, every day, the imprisoned Lake
 Is flowing in the breeze.

Then, crouch no more on suppliant knee,
 But scorn with scorn outbrave;
 A Briton, even in love, should be
 A subject, not a slave!

XII.

To ———.

Look at the fate of summer Flowers,
 Which blow at daybreak, droop ere even-song;
 And, grieved for their brief date, confess that ours,
 Measured by what we are and ought to be,
 Measured by all that, trembling, we foresee,
 Is not so long!

If human Life do pass away,
 Perishing yet more swiftly than the Flower,
 Whose frail existence is but of a day;
 What space hath Virgin's Beauty to disclose
 Her sweets, and triumph o'er the breathing Rose?
 Not even an hour!

The deepest grove whose foliage hid
 The happiest Lovers Arcady might boast,
 Could not the entrance of this thought forbid:
 O be thou wise as they, soul-gifted Maid!
 Nor rate too high what must so quickly fade,
 So soon be lost.

Then shall Love teach some virtuous Youth
 "To draw, out of the Object of his eyes,"
 The whilst on Thee they gaze in simple truth,
 Hues more exalted, "a refinèd Form,"
 That dreads not age, nor suffers from the worm,
 And never dies.

XIII.

'Tis said, that some have died for love:
 And here and there a church-yard grave is found
 In the cold North's unhallowed ground,
 Because the wretched Man himself had slain,
 His love was such a grievous pain.
 And there is one whom I five years have known;
 He dwells alone
 Upon Helvellyn's side:
 He loved — the pretty Barbara died,
 And thus he makes his moan:
 Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid
 When thus his moan he made:

"Oh, move, thou Cottage, from behind that oak!
 Or let the aged tree uprooted lie,
 That in some other way yon smoke
 May mount into the sky!
 The clouds pass on; they from the heavens depart:
 I look — the sky is empty space;
 I know not what I trace;
 But when I cease to look, my hand is on my heart.

"O! what a weight is in these shades! Ye leaves,
 When will that dying murmur be suppress!
 Your sound my heart of peace bereaves,
 It robs my heart of rest.
 Thou Thrush, that singest loud — and loud and free,
 Into yon row of willows flit,
 Upon that alder sit;
 Or sing another song, or choose another tree.

"Roll back, sweet Rill! back to thy mountain bounds,
 And there for ever be thy waters chained!
 For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
 That cannot be sustained;
 If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
 Headlong yon waterfall must come,
 Oh let it then be dumb! —
 Be any thing, sweet Rill, but that which thou art now!

"Thou Eglantine, whose arch so proudly towers
 (Even like a rainbow spanning half the vale)
 Thou one fair shrub, oh! shed thy flowers,
 And stir not in the gale.
 For thus to see thee nodding in the air, —
 To see thy arch thus stretch and bend,
 Thus rise and thus descend, —
 Disturbs me till the sight is more than I can bear."

The Man who makes this feverish complaint
 Is one of giant stature, who could dance
 Equipped from head to foot in iron mail.
 Ah gentle Love! if ever thought was thine
 To store up kindred hours for me, thy face
 Turn from me, gentle Love! nor let me walk
 Within the sound of Emma's voice, or know
 Such happiness as I have known to-day.

XIV.

A COMPLAINT.

THERE is a change — and I am poor;
 Your Love hath been, nor long ago,
 A Fountain at my fond Heart's door,
 Whose only business was to flow;
 And flow it did; not taking heed
 Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
 Blest was I then all bliss above!
 Now, for this consecrated Fount
 Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
 What have I? shall I dare to tell?
 A comfortless and hidden WELL.

A Well of love — it may be deep —
 I trust it is, — and never dry:
 What matter? if the Waters sleep
 In silence and obscurity.
 — Such change, and at the very door
 Of my fond Heart, hath made me poor.

XV.

To ———.

LET other Bards of Angels sing,
 Bright Suns without a spot;
 But thou art no such perfect Thing:
 Rejoice that thou art not!

Such if thou wert in all men's view,
 A universal show,
 What would my Fancy have to do?
 My Feelings to bestow?

Heed not tho' none should call thee fair;
 So, Mary, let it be
 If nought in loveliness compare
 With what thou art to me.

True Beauty dwells in deep retreats,
 Whose veil is unremoved
 Till heart with heart in concord beats,
 And the Lover is beloved.

XVI.

How rich that forehead's calm expanse!
 How bright that Heaven-directed glance!
 — Waft her to Glory, wingèd Powers,
 Ere Sorrow be renewed,
 And intercourse with mortal hours
 Bring back a humbler mood!
 So looked Cecilia when she drew
 An Angel from his station;
 So looked — not ceasing to pursue
 Her tuneful adoration!

But hand and voice alike are still;
 No sound *here* sweeps away the will
 That gave it birth; — in service meek
 One upright arm sustains the cheek,

And one across the bosom lies —
 That rose, and now forgets to rise,
 Subdued by breathless harmonies
 Of meditative feeling;
 Mute strains from worlds beyond the skies,
 Through the pure light of female eyes,
 Their sanctity revealing!

XVII.

To ———.

O DEARER far than light and life are dear,
 Full oft our human foresight I deplore;
 Trembling, through my unworthiness, with fear
 That friends, by death disjoined, may meet no more!

Misgivings, hard to vanquish or control,
 Mix with the day, and cross the hour of rest;
 While all the future, for thy purer soul,
 With “sober certainties” of love is blest.

If a faint sigh, not meant for human ear,
 Tell that these words thy humbleness offend,
 Cherish me still — else faltering in the rear
 Of a steep march: uphold me to the end.

Peace settles where the Intellect is meek,
 And love is dutiful in thought and deed;
 Through Thee communion with that Love I seek;
 The faith Heaven strengthens where *he* moulds the creed.

XVIII.
LAMENT
OF
MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS,
ON THE EVE OF A NEW YEAR.

“SMILE of the Moon! — for so I name
That silent greeting from above;
A gentle flash of light that came
From Her whom drooping Captives love;
Or art thou of still higher birth?
Thou that didst part the clouds of earth,
My torpor to reprove!

“Bright boon of pitying Heaven — alas!
I may not trust thy placid cheer!
Pondering that Time to-night will pass
The threshold of another year;
For years to me are sad and dull;
My very moments are too full
Of hopelessness and fear.

“And yet, the soul-awakening gleam,
That struck perchance the farthest cone
Of Scotland's rocky wilds, did seem
To visit me, and me alone;
Me, unapproached by any friend,
Save those who to my sorrows lend
Tears due unto their own.

“ To-night the church-tower bells will ring
Through these wide realms a festive peal;
To the new year a welcoming;
A tuneful offering for the weal
Of happy millions lulled in sleep;
While I am forced to watch and weep,
By wounds that may not heal.

“ Born all too high, by wedlock raised
Still higher — to be cast thus low!
Would that mine eyes had never gazed
On aught of more ambitious show
Than the sweet flowerets of the fields!
— It is my royal state that yields
This bitterness of woe.

“ Yet how? — for I, if there be truth
In the world’s voice, was passing fair;
And beauty, for confiding youth,
Those shocks of passion can prepare
That kill the bloom before its time,
And blanch, without the Owner’s crime,
The most resplendent hair.

“ Unblest distinction! showered on me
To bind a lingering life in chains: —
All that could quit my grasp, or flee,
Is gone; — but not the subtle stains
Fixed in the spirit; for even here
Can I be proud that jealous fear
Of what I was remains.

“ A Woman rules my prison’s key;
A sister Queen, against the bent
Of law and holiest sympathy,
Detains me — doubtful of the event;
Great God, who feelest for my distress,
My thoughts are all that I possess,
O keep them innocent!

“ Farewell desire of human aid,
Which abject mortals vainly court!
By friends deceived, by foes betrayed,
Of fears the prey, of hopes the sport;
Nought but the world-redeeming Cross
Is able to supply my loss,
My burthen to support.

“ Hark! the death-note of the year
Sounded by the castle-clock!”
From her sunk eyes a stagnant tear
Stole forth, unsettled by the shock;
But oft the woods renewed their green,
Ere the tired head of Scotland’s Queen
Reposed upon the block!

XIX.

THE COMPLAINT

OF A FORSAKEN INDIAN WOMAN.

[*When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions, he is left behind, covered over with Deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel, if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he is unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the Desert; unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other Tribes of Indians. The females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work, Hearne's Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean. In the high Northern Latitudes, as the same writer informs us, when the Northern Lights vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise, as alluded to in the following poem.*]

BEFORE I see another day,
 Oh let my body die away!
 In sleep I heard the northern gleams;
 The stars were mingled with my dreams;
 In rustling conflict through the skies,
 I heard, I saw the flashes drive,
 And yet they are upon my eyes,
 And yet I am alive;
 Before I see another day,
 Oh let my body die away!

My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
 Yet is it dead, and I remain.
 All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
 And they are dead, and I will die.

When I was well, I wished to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire;
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie!
Alone I cannot fear to die.

Alas! ye might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon I yielded to despair;
Why did ye listen to my prayer?
When ye were gone my limbs were stronger;
And oh how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My Friends, I did not follow you!
For strong and without pain I lay,
My Friends, when ye were gone away.

My Child! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.
When from my arms my Babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look!
Through his whole body something ran,
A most strange working did I see;
— As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me:
And then he stretched his arms, how wild!
Oh mercy! like a helpless child.

My little joy! my little pride!
In two days more I must have died.
Then do not weep and grieve for me;
I feel I must have died with thee.

O wind, that o'er my head art flying
The way my Friends their course did bend,
I should not feel the pain of dying,
Could I with thee a message send;
Too soon, my Friends, ye went away;
For I had many things to say.

I'll follow you across the snow;
Ye travel heavily and slow;
In spite of all my weary pain
I'll look upon your tents again.
— My fire is dead, and snowy white
The water which beside it stood;
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I,
Then wherefore should I fear to die?

XX.

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK.

IN distant countries have I been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy Man, a Man full grown,
Weep in the public roads alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad highway, I met;
Along the broad highway he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet:
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad;
And in his arms a Lamb he had.

He saw me, and he turned aside,
As if he wished himself to hide:
Then with his coat he made essay
To wipe those briny tears away.
I followed him, and said, "My Friend,
What ails you? wherefore weep you so?"
—"Shame on me, Sir! this lusty Lamb,
He makes my tears to flow.
To-day I fetched him from the rock;
He is the last of all my flock.

When I was young, a single Man,
And after youthful follies ran,
Though little given to care and thought,
Yet, so it was, an Ewe I bought;
And other sheep from her I raised,
As healthy sheep as you might see;
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be;
Of sheep I numbered a full score,
And every year increased my store.

Year after year my stock it grew;
And from this one, this single Ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As sweet a flock as ever grazed!
Upon the mountain did they feed;
They throve, and we at home did thrive:
—This lusty Lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive;
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.

Six Children, Sir! had I to feed;
Hard labour in a time of need!
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the Parish asked relief.
They said, I was a wealthy man;
My sheep upon the mountain fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread."
"Do this: how can we give to you,"
They cried, "what to the poor is due?"

I sold a sheep, as they had said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food;
For me — it never did me good.
A woeful time it was for me,
To see the end of all my gains,
The pretty flock which I had reared
With all my care and pains,
To see it melt like snow away
For me it was a woeful day.

Another still! and still another!
A little lamb, and then its mother!
It was a vein that never stopped —
Like blood-drops from my heart they dropped.
Till thirty were not left alive
They dwindled, dwindled, one by one,
And I may say, that many a time
I wished they all were gone —
Reckless of what might come at last
Were but the bitter struggle past.

To wicked deeds I was inclined,
And wicked fancies crossed my mind;
And every man I chanced to see,
I thought he knew some ill of me:
No peace, no comfort could I find,
No ease, within doors or without;
And crazily and wearily,
I went my work about,
Bent oftentimes to flee from home,
And hide my head where wild beasts roam.

Sir! 'twas a precious flock to me,
As dear as my own children be;
For daily with my growing store
I loved my children more and more.
Alas! it was an evil time;
God cursed me in my sore distress;
I prayed, yet every day I thought
I loved my children less;
And every week, and every day,
My flock it seemed to melt away.

They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see!
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a wether, and a ewe;—
And then at last from three to two;
And, of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one:
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas! and I have none;—
To-day I fetched it from the rock;
It is the last of all my flock.”

XXI.

REPENTANCE.

A PASTORAL BALLAD.

THE fields which with covetous spirit we sold,
Those beautiful fields, the delight of the day,
Would have brought us more good than a burthen of gold,
Could we but have been as contented as they.

When the troublesome Tempter beset us, said I,
“Let him come, with his purse proudly grasped in his hand;
But, Allan, be true to me, Allan,— we’ll die
Before he shall go with an inch of the land!”

There dwelt we, as happy as birds in their bowers;
Unfettered as bees that in gardens abide;
We could do what we chose with the land, it was ours;
And for us the brook murmured that ran by its side.

But now we are strangers, go early or late;
And often, like one overburthened with sin,
With my hand on the latch of the half-opened gate,
I look at the fields—but I cannot go in!

When I walk by the hedge on a bright summer’s day,
Or sit in the shade of my grandfather’s tree,
A stern face it puts on, as if ready to say,
“What ails you, that you must come creeping to me!”

With our pastures about us, we could not be sad;
Our comfort was near if we ever were crost;
But the comfort, the blessings, and wealth that we had,
We slighted them all, — and our birth-right was lost.

Oh, ill-judging sire of an innocent son
Who must now be a wanderer! — but peace to that strain!
Think of evening's repose when our labour was done,
The Sabbath's return — and its leisure's soft chain!

And in sickness, if night had been sparing of sleep,
How cheerful, at sunrise, the hill where I stood,
Looking down on the kine, and our treasure of sheep
That besprinkled the field — 'twas like youth in my blood!

Now I cleave to the house, and am dull as a snail;
And, oftentimes, hear the church-bell with a sigh,
That follows the thought — We've no land in the vale,
Save six feet of earth where our forefathers lie!

XXII.

THE AFFLICTION

OF

MARGARET.

WHERE art thou, my beloved Son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
Oh find me, prosperous or undone!
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same
That I may rest; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child;
To have despaired, and have believed,
And be for evermore beguiled;

Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
I catch at them, and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;
Well born, well bred; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold:
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base;
And never blush was on my face.

Ah! little doth the Young-one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his Mother unawares!
He knows it not, he cannot guess:
Years to a Mother bring distress;
But do not make her love the less.

Neglect me! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought; and, being blind,
Said, "Pride shall help me in my wrong:
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed:" and that is true;
I've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh! do not dread thy mother's door;
Think not of me with grief and pain:
I now can see with better eyes;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

Alas! the fowls of Heaven have wings,
And blasts of Heaven will aid their flight;
They mount — how short a voyage brings
The Wanderers back to their delight!
Chains tie us down by land and sea;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men;
Or thou upon a Desert thrown
Inheritest the Lion's Den;
Or hast been summoned to the Deep,
Thou, Thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

I look for Ghosts; but none will force
Their way to me: — 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of Him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

My apprehensions come in crowds;
I dread the rustling of the grass;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass:
I question things, and do not find
One that will answer to my mind;
And all the world appears unkind.

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief:
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my Son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end;
I have no other earthly friend!

XXIII.

THE COTTAGER TO HER INFANT.

BY A FEMALE FRIEND.

THE days are cold, the nights are long,
The north-wind sings a doleful song;
Then hush again upon my breast;
All merry things are now at rest,
Save thee, my pretty Love!

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth,
The crickets long have ceased their mirth;
There's nothing stirring in the house
Save one *wee*, hungry, nibbling mouse,
Then why so busy thou?

Nay! start not at that sparkling light;
'Tis but the moon that shines so bright
On the window pane bedropped with rain:
Then, little Darling! sleep again,
And wake when it is day.

XXIV.

THE SAILOR'S MOTHER.

ONE morning (raw it was and wet
A foggy day in winter time)
A Woman on the road I met,
Not old, though something past her prime:
Majestic in her person, tall and straight;
And like a Roman matron's was her mien and gait.

The ancient Spirit is not dead;
Old times, thought I, are breathing there;
Proud was I that my country bred
Such strength, a dignity so fair:
She begged an alms, like one in poor estate;
I looked at her again, nor did my pride abate.

When from these lofty thoughts I woke,
"What treasure," said I, "do you bear,
Beneath the covert of your Cloak,
Protected from the cold damp air?"
She answered, soon as she the question heard,
"A simple burthen, Sir, a little Singing-bird."

And, thus continuing, she said,
"I had a Son, who many a day
Sailed on the seas, but he is dead;
In Denmark he was cast away:
And I have travelled weary miles to see
If aught which he had owned might still remain for me.

“ The Bird and Cage they both were his:
'Twas my Son's Bird; and neat and trim
He kept it: many voyages
This Singing-bird had gone with him;
When last he sailed, he left the Bird behind;
From bodings, as might be, that hung upon his mind.

“ He to a Fellow-lodger's care
Had left it, to be watched and fed,
And pipe its song in safety; — there
I found it when my Son was dead;
And now, God help me for my little wit!
I bear it with me, Sir, he took so much delight in it.”

XXV.

THE CHILDLESS FATHER.

“ UP, Timothy, up with your Staff and away!
Not a soul in the village this morning will stay;
The Hare has just started from Hamilton's grounds,
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds.”

— Of coats and of jackets grey, scarlet, and green,
On the slopes of the pastures all colours were seen;
With their comely blue aprons, and caps white as snow,
The girls on the hills made a holiday show.

Fresh springs of green box-wood, not six months before,
Filled the funeral basin* at Timothy's door;
A Coffin through Timothy's threshold had past;
One Child did it bear, and that Child was his last.

Now fast up the dell came the noise and the fray,
The horse and the horn, and the hark! hark away!
Old Timothy took up his staff, and he shut
With a leisurely motion the door of his hut.

Perhaps to himself at that moment he said,
"The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead."
But of this in my ears not a word did he speak,
And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.

XXVI.

THE EMIGRANT MOTHER.

ONCE in a lonely Hamlet I sojourned
In which a Lady driven from France did dwell;
The big and lesser griefs with which she mourned,
In friendship she to me would often tell.

This Lady, dwelling upon English ground,
Where she was childless, daily would repair
To a poor neighbouring Cottage; as I found,
For sake of a young Child whose home was there.

* In several parts of the North of England when a funeral takes place, a basin full of Sprigs of Box-wood is placed at the door of the house from which the coffin is taken up, and each person who attends the funeral ordinarily takes a Sprig of this Box-wood, and throws it into the grave of the deceased.

Once having seen her take with fond embrace,
This Infant to herself, I framed a lay,
Endeavouring, in my native tongue, to trace
Such things as she unto the Child might say:
And thus, from what I knew, had heard, and guessed,
My song the workings of her heart expressed.

“ Dear Babe, thou Daughter of another,
One moment let me be thy Mother!
An Infant’s face and looks are thine;
And sure a Mother’s heart is mine:
Thy own dear Mother’s far away,
At labour in the harvest field:
Thy little Sister is at play; —
What warmth, what comfort would it yield
To my poor heart, if Thou would’st be
One little hour a Child to me!

Across the waters I am come,
And I have left a Babe at home:
A long, long way of land and sea!
Come to me — I’m no enemy:
I am the same who at thy side
Sate yesterday, and made a nest
For thee, sweet Baby! — thou hast tried,
Thou knowest the pillow of my breast;
Good, good art thou: — alas! to me
Far more than I can be to thee.

Here, little Darling, dost thou lie;
An Infant Thou, a Mother I!
Mine wilt thou be, thou hast no fears;
Mine art thou — spite of these my tears.

Alas! before I left the spot,
My Baby and its dwelling-place;
The Nurse said to me, 'Tears should not
Be shed upon an Infant's face,
It was unlucky' — no, no, no;
No truth is in them who say so!

My own dear Little-one will sigh,
Sweet Babe! and they will let him die.
'He pines,' they'll say, 'it is his doom,
And you may see his hour is come.'
Oh! had he but thy cheerful smiles,
Limbs stout as thine, and lips as gay,
Thy looks, thy cunning, and thy wiles,
And countenance like a summer's day,
They would have hopes of him — and then
I should behold his face again!

'Tis gone — like dreams that we forget;
There was a smile or two — yet — yet
I can remember them, I see
The smiles, worth all the world to me.
Dear Baby! I must lay thee down;
Thou troublest me with strange alarms;
Smiles hast Thou, bright ones of thy own;
I cannot keep thee in my arms,
By those bewildering glances crost
In which the light of his is lost.

Oh! how I love thee! — we will stay
Together here this one half day.
My Sister's Child, who bears my name,
From France to sheltering England came;

She with her Mother crossed the sea;
The Babe and Mother near me dwell:
My Darling, she is not to me
What thou art! though I love her well:
Rest, little Stranger, rest thee here!
Never was any Child more dear!

— I cannot help it — ill intent
I've none, my pretty Innocent!
I weep — I know they do thee wrong,
These tears — and my poor idle tongue.
Oh, what a kiss was that! my cheek
How cold it is! but thou art good;
Thine eyes are on me — they would speak,
I think, to help me if they could.
Blessings upon that soft, warm face,
My heart again is in its place!

While thou art mine, my little Love,
This cannot be a sorrowful grove;
Contentment, hope, and Mother's glee,
I seem to find them all in thee:
Here's grass to play with, here are flowers;
I'll call thee by my Darling's name;
Thou hast, I think, a look of ours,
Thy features seem to me the same;
His little Sister thou shalt be;
And, when once more my home I see,
I'll tell him many tales of Thee."

XXVII.

VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA.

The following tale was written as an Episode, in a work from which its length may perhaps exclude it. The facts are true; no invention as to these has been exercised, as none was needed.

O HAPPY time of youthful lovers (thus
My story may begin) O balmy time,
In which a love-knot on a lady's brow
Is fairer than the fairest star in heaven!
To such inheritance of blessed fancy
(Fancy that sports more desperately with minds
Than ever fortune hath been known to do)
The high-born Vaudracour was brought, by years
Whose progress had a little overstepped
His stripling prime. A town of small repute,
Among the vine-clad mountains of Auvergne,
Was the Youth's birth-place. There he wooed a Maid
Who heard the heart-felt music of his suit
With answering vows. Plebeian was the stock,
Plebeian, though ingenuous, the stock,
From which her graces and her honours sprung:
And hence the father of the enamoured Youth,
With haughty indignation, spurned the thought
Of such alliance. — From their cradles up,
With but a step between their several homes,
Twins had they been in pleasure; after strife
And petty quarrels, had grown fond again;
Each other's advocate, each other's stay;
And strangers to content if long apart,
Or more divided than a sportive pair
Of sea-fowl, conscious both that they are hovering

Within the eddy of a common blast,
Or hidden only by the concave depth
Of neighbouring billows from each other's sight.

Thus, not without concurrence of an age
Unknown to memory, was an earnest given
By ready nature for a life of love,
For endless constancy, and placid truth;
But whatsoe'er of such rare treasure lay
Reserved, had fate permitted, for support
Of their maturer years, his present mind
Was under fascination; — he beheld
A vision, and adored the thing he saw.
Arabian fiction never filled the world
With half the wonders that were wrought for him.
Earth breathed in one great presence of the spring;
Life turned the meanest of her implements,
Before his eyes, to price above all gold;
The house she dwelt in was a sainted shrine;
Her chamber window did surpass in glory
The portals of the dawn; all paradise
Could, by the simple opening of a door,
Let itself in upon him; pathways, walks,
Swarmed with enchantment, till his spirit sank,
Surcharged, within him, — overblest to move
Beneath a sun that wakes a weary world
To its dull round of ordinary cares;
A man too happy for mortality!

So passed the time, till, whether through effect
Of some unguarded moment that dissolved
Virtuous restraint — ah, speak it — think it not!
Deem rather that the fervent Youth, who saw
So many bars between his present state

And the dear haven where he wished to be
In honourable wedlock with his Love,
Was in his judgment tempted to decline
To perilous weakness, and entrust his cause
To nature for a happy end of all;
Deem that by such fond hope the Youth was swayed,
And bear with their transgression, when I add
That Julia, wanting yet the name of wife,
Carried about her for a secret grief
The promise of a mother.

To conceal
The threatened shame, the parents of the Maid
Found means to hurry her away by night,
And unforewarned, that in some distant spot
She might remain shrouded in privacy,
Until the babe was born. When morning came,
The Lover, thus bereft, stung with his loss,
And all uncertain whither he should turn,
Chafed like a wild beast in the toils; but soon
Discovering traces of the fugitives,
Their steps he followed to the Maid's retreat.
The sequel may be easily divined —
Walks to and fro — watchings at every hour;
And the fair Captive, who, whene'er she may,
Is busy at her casement as the swallow
Fluttering its pinions, almost within reach,
About the pendant nest, did thus espy
Her Lover! — thence a stolen interview,
Accomplished under friendly shade of night.

I pass the raptures of the Pair; — such theme
Is, by innumerable poets, touched
In more delightful verse than skill of mine
Could fashion, chiefly by that darling bard

Who told of Juliet and her Romeo,
And of the lark's note heard before its time,
And of the streaks that laced the severing clouds
In the unrelenting east. — Through all her courts
The vacant city slept; the busy winds,
That keep no certain intervals of rest,
Moved not; meanwhile the galaxy displayed
Her fires, that like mysterious pulses beat
Aloft; — momentous but uneasy bliss!
To their full hearts the universe seemed hung
On that brief meeting's slender filament!

They parted; and the generous Vaudracour
Reached speedily the native threshold, bent
On making (so the Lovers had agreed)
A sacrifice of birthright to attain
A final portion from his Father's hand;
Which granted, Bride and Bridegroom then would flee
To some remote and solitary place,
Shady as night, and beautiful as heaven,
Where they may live, with no one to behold
Their happiness, or to disturb their love.
But *now* of this no whisper; not the less,
If ever an obtrusive word were dropped
Touching the matter of his passion, still,
In his stern Father's hearing, Vaudracour
Persisted openly that death alone
Should abrogate his human privilege
Divine, of swearing everlasting truth,
Upon the altar, to the Maid he loved.

“You shall be baffled in your mad intent
If there be justice in the Court of France,”
Muttered the Father. — From these words the Youth

Conceived a terror, — and, by night or day,
Stirred nowhere without weapons — that full soon
Found dreadful provocation: for at night
When to his chamber he retired, attempt
Was made to seize him by three armed men,
Acting, in furtherance of the Father's will,
Under a private signet of the State.
One, did the Youth's ungovernable hand
Assault and slay; — and to a second, gave
A perilous wound, — he shuddered to behold
The breathless corse; then peacefully resigned
His person to the law, was lodged in prison,
And wore the fetters of a criminal.

Have you beheld a tuft of winged seed
That, from the dandelion's naked stalk,
Mounted aloft, is suffered not to use
Its natural gifts for purposes of rest,
Driven by the autumnal whirlwind to and fro
Through the wide element? or have you marked
The heavier substance of a leaf-clad bough,
Within the vortex of a foaming flood,
Tormented? by such aid you may conceive
The perturbation of each mind; — ah, no!
Desperate the Maid — the Youth is stained with blood;
But as the troubled seed and tortured bough
Is Man, subjected to despotic sway.

For him, by private influence with the Court,
Was pardon gained, and liberty procured;
But not without exaction of a pledge,
Which liberty and love dispersed in air.
He flew to her from whom they would divide him —
He clove to her who could not give him peace —

Yea, his first word of greeting was, — “All right
Is gone from me; my lately-towering hopes,
To the least fibre of their lowest root,
Are withered; — thou no longer canst be mine,
I thine — the Conscience-stricken must not woo
The unruffled Innocent, — I see thy face,
Behold thee, and my misery is complete!”

“One, are we not?” exclaimed the Maiden — “One,
For innocence and youth, for weal and woe?”
Then with the Father’s name she coupled words
Of vehement indignation; but the Youth
Checked her with filial meekness; for no thought
Uncharitable, no presumptuous rising
Of hasty censure, modelled in the eclipse
Of true domestic loyalty, did e’er
Find place within his bosom. — Once again
The persevering wedge of tyranny
Achieved their separation; — and once more
Were they united, — to be yet again
Disparted — pitiable lot! But here
A portion of the Tale may well be left
In silence, though my memory could add
Much how the Youth, in scanty space of time,
Was traversed from without; much, too, of thoughts
That occupied his days in solitude
Under privation and restraint; and what,
Through dark and shapeless fear of things to come,
And what, through strong compunction for the past,
He suffered — breaking down in heart and mind!

Doomed to a third and last captivity,
His freedom he recovered on the eve
Of Julia’s travail. When the babe was born,

Its presence tempted him to cherish schemes
Of future happiness. “You shall return,
Julia,” said he, “and to your Father’s house
Go with the Child. — You have been wretched, yet
The silver shower, whose reckless burthen weighs
Too heavily upon the lily’s head,
Oft leaves a saving moisture at its root.
Malice, beholding you, will melt away.
Go! — ’tis a Town where both of us were born;
None will reproach you, for our truth is known;
And if, amid those once-bright bowers, our fate
Remain unpitied, pity is not in man.
With ornaments — the prettiest, nature yields
Or art can fashion, shall you deck your Boy,
And feed his countenance with your own sweet looks
Till no one can resist him. — Now, even now,
I see him sporting on the sunny lawn;
My Father from the window sees him too;
Startled, as if some new-created Thing
Enriched the earth, or Faery of the woods
Bounded before him; — but the unweeting Child
Shall by his beauty win his Grandsire’s heart
So that it shall be softened, and our loves
End happily — as they began!” These gleams
Appeared but seldom; oftener was he seen
Propping a pale and melancholy face
Upon the Mother’s bosom; resting thus
His head upon one breast, while from the other
The Babe was drawing in its quiet food.
— That pillow is no longer to be thine,
Fond Youth! that mournful solace now must pass
Into the list of things that cannot be!
Unwedded Julia, terror-smitten, hears
The sentence, by her Mother’s lip pronounced,

That dooms her to a Convent.— Who shall tell,
Who dares report, the tidings to the Lord
Of her affections? So they blindly asked
Who knew not to what quiet depths a weight
Of agony had pressed the Sufferer down; —
The word, by others dreaded, he can hear
Composed and silent, without visible sign
Of even the least emotion. Noting this,
When the impatient Object of his love
Upbraided him with slackness, he returned
No answer, only took the Mother's hand
And kissed it — seemingly devoid of pain,
Or care, that what so tenderly he pressed,
Was a dependent on the obdurate heart
Of One who came to disunite their lives
For ever — sad alternative! preferred,
By the unbending Parents of the Maid,
To secret 'spousals meanly disavowed.
— So be it!

In the city he remained
A season after Julia had withdrawn
To those religious walls. He, too, departs —
Who with him? — even the senseless Little-one!
With that sole Charge he passed the city-gates,
For the last time, attendant by the side
Of a close chair, a litter, or sedan,
In which the Babe was carried. To a hill,
That rose a brief league distant from the town,
The Dwellers in that house where he had lodged
Accompanied his steps, by anxious love
Impelled, — they parted from him there, and stood
Watching below, till he had disappeared
On the hill top. His eyes he scarcely took,
Throughout that journey, from the vehicle

(Slow-moving ark of all his hopes!) that veiled
The tender Infant: and at every inn,
And under every hospitable tree
At which the Bearers halted or reposed,
Laid him with timid care upon his knees,
And looked, as mothers ne'er were known to look,
Upon the Nursling which his arms embraced.
— This was the manner in which Vaudracour
Departed with his Infant; and thus reached
His Father's house, where to the innocent Child
Admittance was denied. The young Man spake
No words of indignation or reproof,
But of his Father begged, a last request,
That a retreat might be assigned to him
Where in forgotten quiet he might dwell,
With such allowance as his wants required;
For wishes he had none. To a Lodge that stood
Deep in a forest, with leave given, at the age
Of four-and-twenty summers he withdrew;
And thither took with him his infant Babe,
And one Domestic for their common needs,
An aged Woman. It consoled him here
To attend upon the Orphan, and perform
Obsequious service to the precious Child,
Which, after a short time, by some mistake
Or indiscretion of the Father, died.—
The Tale I follow to its last recess
Of suffering or of peace, I know not which:
Theirs be the blame who caused the woe, not mine!

From this time forth he never shared a smile
With mortal creature. An Inhabitant
Of that same Town, in which the Pair had left
So lively a remembrance of their griefs,

By chance of business, coming within reach
Of his retirement, to the forest lodge
Repaired, but only found the Matron there,
Who told him that his pains were thrown away,
For that her Master never uttered word
To living Thing — not even to her. — Behold!
While they were speaking, Vaudracour approached;
But, seeing some one near, even as his hand
Was stretched towards the garden gate, he shrunk —
And, like a shadow, glided out of view.
Shocked at his savage aspect, from the place
The Visitor retired.

Thus lived the Youth
Cut off from all intelligence with man,
And shunning even the light of common day;
Nor could the voice of Freedom, which through France
Full speedily resounded, public hope,
Or personal memory of his own deep wrongs,
Rouse him: but in those solitary shades
His days he wasted, an imbecile mind!

XXVIII.

THE IDIOT BOY.

'Tis eight o'clock, — a clear March night,
The Moon is up, — the Sky is blue,
The Owlet, in the moonlight air,
Shouts, from nobody knows where;
He lengthens out his lonely shout,
Halloo! halloo! a long halloo!

— Why bustle thus about your door,
What means this bustle, Betty Foy?
Why are you in this mighty fret?
And why on horseback have you set
Him whom you love, your Idiot Boy?

There's scarce a soul that's out of bed;
Good Betty, put him down again;
His lips with joy they burr at you;
But, Betty! what has he to do
With stirrup, saddle, or with rein?

But Betty's bent on her intent;
For her good neighbour, Susan Gale,
Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
Is sick, and makes a piteous moan,
As if her very life would fail.

There's not a house within a mile,
No hand to help them in distress;
Old Susan lies a-bed in pain,
And sorely puzzled are the twain,
For what she ails they cannot guess.

And Betty's Husband's at the wood,
Where by the week he doth abide,
A woodman in the distant vale;
There's none to help poor Susan Gale;
What must be done? what will betide?

And Betty from the lane has fetched
Her Pony, that is mild and good,
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane,
Or bringing faggots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim, —
And, by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has up upon the saddle set
(The like was never heard of yet)
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And he must post without delay
Across the bridge and through the dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town,
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand;
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a *hurly-burly* now
He shakes the green bough in his hand.

And Betty o'er and o'er has told
The Boy, who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone,
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge,
Was, "Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
Come home again, nor stop at all, —
Come home again, whate'er befall,
My Johnny, do, I pray you do."

To this did Johnny answer make,
Both with his head and with his hand,
And proudly shook the bridle too;
And then! his words were not a few,
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty's in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the Pony's side,
On which her Idiot Boy must ride,
And seems no longer in a hurry.

But when the Pony moved his legs,
Oh! then for the poor Idiot Boy!
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He's idle all for very joy.

And while the Pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left hand you may see
The green bough motionless and dead:
The Moon that shines above his head
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee,
That till full fifty yards were gone,
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship,
Oh! happy, happy, happy John.

And while the Mother, at the door,
Stands fixed, her face with joy o'erflows,
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim,
How quietly her Johnny goes.

The silence of her Idiot Boy,
What hopes it sends to Betty's heart!
He's at the Guide-post — he turns right,
She watches till he's out of sight,
And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr — now Johnny's lips they burr,
As loud as any mill, or near it;
Meek as a lamb the Pony moves,
And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
And Betty listens, glad to hear it.

Away she hies to Susan Gale:
Her Messenger's in merry tune;
The Owlets hoot, the Owlets curr,
And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
As on he goes beneath the Moon.

His Steed and He right well agree;
For of this Pony there's a rumour,
That, should he lose his eyes and ears,
And should he live a thousand years,
He never will be out of humour.

But then he is a Horse that thinks!
And when he thinks his pace is slack;
Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
Yet, for his life, he cannot tell
What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
And far into the moonlight dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And Betty, now at Susan's side,
Is in the middle of her story,
What comfort soon her Boy will bring,
With many a most diverting thing,
Of Johnny's wit, and Johnny's glory.

And Betty, still at Susan's side,
By this time is not quite so flurried:
Demure with porringer and plate
She sits, as if in Susan's fate
Her life and soul were buried.

But Betty, poor good Woman! she,
You plainly in her face may read it,
Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more
To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well;
And to the road she turns her ears,
And thence full many a sound she hears,
Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
"As sure as there's a moon in heaven,"
Cries Betty, "he'll be back again;
They'll both be here — 'tis almost ten —
Both will be here before eleven."

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
The clock gives warning for eleven;
'Tis on the stroke — "He must be near,"
Quoth Betty, "and will soon be here,
As sure as there's a moon in heaven."

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
And Johnny is not yet in sight,
— The Moon's in heaven, as Betty sees,
But Betty is not quite at ease;
And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
On Johnny vile reflections cast:
“A little idle sauntering Thing!”
With other names, an endless string;
But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty's drooping at the heart,
That happy time all past and gone,
“How can it be he is so late?
The Doctor he has made him wait,
Susan! they'll both be here anon.”

And Susan's growing worse and worse,
And Betty's in a sad *quandary*;
And then there's nobody to say
If she must go, or she must stay!
— She's in a sad *quandary*.

The clock is on the stroke of one;
But neither Doctor nor his Guide
Appear along the moonlight road;
There's neither horse nor man abroad,
And Betty's still at Susan's side.

And Susan now begins to fear
Of sad mischances not a few,
That Johnny may perhaps be drowned,
Or lost, perhaps, and never found;
Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
With, “God forbid it should be true!”
At the first word that Susan said
Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
“Susan, I'd gladly stay with you.

“ I must be gone, I must away,
Consider, Johnny’s but half-wise;
Susan, we must take care of him,
If he is hurt in life or limb” —
“ Oh God forbid!” poor Susan cries.

“ What can I do?” says Betty, going,
“ What can I do to ease your pain?
Good Susan tell me, and I’ll stay;
I fear you’re in a dreadful way,
But I shall soon be back again.”

“ Nay, Betty, go! good Betty, go!
There’s nothing that can ease my pain.”
Then off she hies; but with a prayer
That God poor Susan’s life would spare,
Till she comes back again.

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
And far into the moonlight dale;
And how she ran, and how she walked,
And all that to herself she talked,
Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
In great and small, in round and square,
In tree and tower was Johnny seen,
In bush and brake, in black and green,
’Twas Johnny, Johnny, every where.

The bridge is past — far in the dale;
And now the thought torments her sore,
Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
To hunt the moon within the brook,
And never will be heard of more.

Now is she high upon the down,
Alone amid a prospect wide;
There's neither Johnny nor his Horse
Among the fern or in the gorse;
There's neither Doctor nor his Guide.

“ Oh saints! what is become of him?
Perhaps he's climbed into an oak,
Where he will stay till he is dead;
Or, sadly he has been misled,
And joined the wandering gipsy-folk.

“ Or him that wicked Pony's carried
To the dark cave, the goblin's hall;
Or in the castle he's pursuing
Among the ghosts his own undoing;
Or playing with the waterfall.”

At poor old Susan then she railed,
While to the town she posts away;
“ If Susan had not been so ill,
Alas! I should have had him still,
My Johnny, till my dying day.”

Poor Betty, in this sad distemper,
The Doctor's self could hardly spare;
Unworthy things she talked, and wild;
Even he, of cattle the most mild,
The Pony had his share.

And now she's got into the town,
And to the Doctor's door she hies;
'Tis silence all on every side;
The town so long, the town so wide,
Is silent as the skies.

And now she's at the Doctor's door,
She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap;
The Doctor at the casement shows
His glimmering eyes that peep and doze!
And one hand rubs his old night-cap.

"Oh Doctor! Doctor! where's my Johnny?"

"I'm here, what is't you want with me?"

"Oh Sir! you know I'm Betty Foy,
And I have lost my poor dear Boy,
You know him — him you often see;

"He's not so wise as some folks be."

"The devil take his wisdom!" said

The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,

"What, Woman! should I know of him?"

And, grumbling, he went back to bed.

"O woe is me! O woe is me!

Here will I die; here will I die;

I thought to find my lost one here,

But he is neither far nor near,

Oh! what a wretched Mother I!"

She stops, she stands, she looks about;

Which way to turn she cannot tell.

Poor Betty! it would ease her pain

If she had heart to knock again;

— The clock strikes three — a dismal knell!

Then up along the town she hies,

No wonder if her senses fail,

This piteous news so much it shocked her,

She quite forgot to send the Doctor,

To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she's high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road:
"Oh cruel! I'm almost threescore;
Such night as this was ne'er before,
There's not a single soul abroad."

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man;
The streams with softest sound are flowing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now, if e'er you can.

The Owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still:
Fond lovers! yet not quite hob nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob,
That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin,
A green-grown pond she just has past,
And from the brink she hurries fast,
Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps;
Such tears she never shed before;
"Oh dear, dear Pony! my sweet joy!
Oh carry back my Idiot Boy!
And we will ne'er o'erload thee more."

A thought is come into her head:
"The Pony he is mild and good,
And we have always used him well;
Perhaps he's gone along the dell,
And carried Johnny to the wood."

Then up she springs as if on wings;
She thinks no more of deadly sin;
If Betty fifty ponds should see,
The last of all her thoughts would be
To drown herself therein.

O Reader! now that I might tell
What Johnny and his Horse are doing!
What they've been doing all this time,
Oh could I put it into rhyme,
A most delightful tale pursuing!

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought!
He with his Pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star,
And in his pocket bring it home.

Perhaps he's turned himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And, still and mute, in wonder lost,
All like a silent Horseman-Ghost,
He travels on along the vale.

And now, perhaps, is hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he;
Yon valley, now so trim and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen,
A desert wilderness will be!

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He's galloping away, away,
And so will gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil!

I to the Muses have been bound
These fourteen years, by strong indentures:
O gentle Muses! let me tell
But half of what to him befel;
He surely met with strange adventures.

O gentle Muses! is this kind?
Why will ye thus my suit repel?
Why of your further aid bereave me?
And can ye thus unfriended leave me;
Ye Muses! whom I love so well?

Who's yon, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force,
Beneath the Moon, yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding Horse?

Unto his Horse, there feeding free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give;
Of Moon or Stars he takes no heed;
Of such we in romances read:
—'Tis Johnny! Johnny! as I live.

And that's the very Pony, too!
Where is she, where is Betty Foy?
She hardly can sustain her fears;
The roaring waterfall she hears,
And cannot find her Idiot Boy.

Your Pony's worth his weight in gold:
Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy!
She's coming from among the trees,
And now all full in view she sees
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And Betty sees the Pony too:
Why stand you thus, good Betty Foy?
It is no goblin, 'tis no ghost,
'Tis he whom you so long have lost,
He whom you love, your Idiot Boy.

She looks again — her arms are up —
She screams — she cannot move for joy;
She darts, as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturned the Horse,
And fast she holds her Idiot Boy.

And Johnny burrs, and laughs aloud;
Whether in cunning or in joy
I cannot tell; but while he laughs,
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs
To hear again her Idiot Boy.

And now she's at the Pony's tail,
And now is at the Pony's head, —
On that side now, and now on this;
And, almost stifled with her bliss,
A few sad tears does Betty shed.

She kisses o'er and o'er again
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy;
She's happy here, is happy there,
She is uneasy every where;
Her limbs are all alive with joy.

She pats the Pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Foy!
The little Pony glad may be,
But he is milder far than she,
You hardly can perceive his joy.

“ Oh! Johnny, never mind the Doctor;
You’ve done your best, and that is all.”
She took the reins, when this was said,
And gently turned the Pony’s head
From the loud waterfall.

By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely looked at her:
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

The Pony, Betty, and her Boy,
Wind slowly through the woody dale;
And who is she, betimes abroad,
That hobbles up the steep rough road?
Who is it, but old Susan Gale?

Long time lay Susan lost in thought,
And many dreadful fears beset her,
Both for her Messenger and Nurse;
And, as her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body — it grew better.

She turned, she tossed herself in bed,
On all sides doubts and terrors met her;
Point after point did she discuss;
And, while her mind was fighting thus,
Her body still grew better.

“ Alas! what is become of them?
These fears can never be endured,
I’ll to the wood.” — The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

Away she posts up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come;
She spies her Friends, she shouts a greeting;
Oh me! it is a merry meeting
As ever was in Christendom.

The Owls have hardly sung their last,
While our four Travellers homeward wend;
The Owls have hooted all night long,
And with the Owls began my song,
And with the Owls must end.

For while they all were travelling home,
Cried Betty, "Tell us, Johnny, do,
Where all this long night you have been,
What you have heard, what you have seen,
And, Johnny, mind you tell us true."

Now Johnny all night long had heard
The Owls in tuneful concert strive;
No doubt too he the Moon had seen;
For in the moonlight he had been
From eight o'clock till five.

And thus, to Betty's question, he
Made answer, like a Traveller bold,
(His very words I give to you,)
"The Cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,
And the sun did shine so cold."
— Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
And that was all his travel's story.

XXIX.

MICHAEL,

A PASTORAL POEM.

IF from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral Mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for around that boisterous Brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that place a story appertains,
Which, though it be ungarnished with events,
Is not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; — not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills

Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these Hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

UPON the Forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his Shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, He heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of Bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And, truly, at all times, the storm — that drives
The Traveller to a shelter — summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone

Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him and left him on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green Valleys, and the Streams and Rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; the hills, which he so oft
Had climbed with vigorous steps; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts,
The certainty of honourable gain,
Those fields, those hills—what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely Matron, old —
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form, this large for spinning wool,
That small for flax; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old, — in Shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave Sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,

The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their Household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then,
Their labour did not cease; unless when all
Turned to their cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round their basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when their meal
Was ended, LUKE (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fire-side; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
Did with a huge projection overbrow
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a Lamp;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn and late,
Surviving Comrade of uncounted Hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when LUKE had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old Lamp they sat,

Father and Son, while late into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This Light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public Symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their Cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, North and South,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And Westward to the village near the Lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This Son of his old age was yet more dear —
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Blind Spirit, which is in the blood of all —
Than that a child, more than all other gifts,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His Heart and his Heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of Fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle with a woman's gentle hand,

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on Boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Had work by his own door, or when he sat
With sheep before him on his Shepherd's stool,
Beneath that large old Oak, which near their door
Stood, — and, from its enormous breadth of shade
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE*, a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the Boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old,
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect Shepherd's Staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
He as a Watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the Urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hinderance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,

* Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

Receiving from his Father hire of praise ;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts ; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now ? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations — things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind ;
And that the Old Man's heart seemed born again ?

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up :
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

WHILE in this sort the simple Household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his Brother's Son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means, —
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him, — and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.

As soon as he had gathered so much strength
That he could look his trouble in the face,
It seemed that his sole refuge was to sell
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a Stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil Man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him — but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies, and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another Kinsman — he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade — and Luke to him shall go,
And with his Kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
May come again to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,

What can be gained?" At this the Old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a Parish-boy — at the Church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A Basket, which they filled with Pedlar's wares;
And, with this Basket on his arm, the Lad
Went up to London, found a Master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty Boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas: where he grew wonderous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a Chapel floored
With Marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The Old Man was glad,
And thus resumed: — "Well, Isabel! this scheme,
These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
— We have enough — I wish indeed that I
Were younger, — but this hope is a good hope.
— Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
— If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."
Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came

To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the two last nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember — do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their Kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbours round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the Old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
In that deep Valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheep-fold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the Streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked;
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the Old Man spake to him: — "My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should speak
Of things thou canst not know of. — After thou
First camest into the world — as oft befalls
To new-born infants — thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fire-side
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
When thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou

Lack any pleasure which a boy can know.”
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The Old Man grasped his hand,
And said, “Nay, do not take it so — I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
— Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others’ hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived.
But, ’tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
— It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go.” At this the Old Man paused;
Then, pointing to the Stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
“This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one Stone —
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope; — we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four

I still am strong and hale; — do thou thy part;
I will do mine. — I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face. — Heaven bless thee, Boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes — It should be so — Yes — yes —
I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us! — But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
Mayst bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well —
When thou returnest, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us — But, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheep-fold. At the sight
The Old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept;

And to the house together they returned.
— Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell: — with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public Way, he put on a bold face;
And all the Neighbours, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wonderous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
“The prettiest letters that were ever seen.”
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the Old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age

Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up towards the sun,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his Sheep,
And for the land his small inheritance.
And to that hollow Dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the Old Man — and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, with that his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this sheep-fold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a Stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was named the EVENING STAR
Is gone — the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood: — yet the Oak is left
That grew beside their Door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

THE WAGGONER.

TO
CHARLES LAMB, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN I sent you, a few weeks ago, the Tale of Peter Bell, you asked “why THE WAGGONER was not added?” — To say the truth, — from the higher tone of imagination, and the deeper touches of passion aimed at in the former, I apprehended, this little Piece could not accompany it without disadvantage. In the year 1806, if I am not mistaken, THE WAGGONER was read to you in manuscript; and, as you have remembered it for so long a time, I am the more encouraged to hope, that, since the localities on which it partly depends did not prevent its being interesting to you, it may prove acceptable to others. Being therefore in some measure the cause of its present appearance, you must allow me the gratification of inscribing it to you; in acknowledgment of the pleasure I have derived from your Writings, and of the high esteem with which I am

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, *May* 20. 1819.

THE WAGGONER.

CANTO FIRST.

'Tis spent — this burning day of June!
 Soft darkness o'er its latest gleams is stealing;
 The dor-hawk, solitary bird,
 Round the dim crags on heavy pinions wheeling,
 Buzzes incessantly, a tiresome tune;
 That constant voice is all that can be heard
 In silence deeper far than that of deepest noon!

Confiding Glow-worms! 'tis a night
 Propitious to your earth-born light;
 But where the scattered stars are seen
 In hazy straits the clouds between,
 Each, in his station twinkling not,
 Seems changed into a pallid spot.
 The air, as in a lion's den,
 Is close and hot; — and now and then
 Comes a tired and sultry breeze
 With a haunting and a panting,
 Like the stifling of disease;
 The mountains rise to wondrous height,
 And in the heavens there hangs a weight;
 But the dews allay the heat,
 And the silence makes it sweet.

Hush, there is some one on the stir!
 'Tis Benjamin the Waggoner;

Who long hath trod this toilsome way,
Companion of the night and day.
That far-off tinkling's drowsy cheer,
Mixed with a faint yet grating sound
In a moment lost and found,
The Wain announces — by whose side,
Along the banks of Rydal Mere,
He paces on, a trusty Guide, —
Listen! you can scarcely hear!
Hither he his course is bending; —
Now he leaves the lower ground,
And up the craggy hill ascending
Many a stop and stay he makes,
Many a breathing-fit he takes; —
Steep the way and wearisome,
Yet all the while his whip is dumb!

The Horses have worked with right good-will,
And now have gained the top of the hill,
He was patient — they were strong —
And now they smoothly glide along,
Gathering breath, and pleased to win
The praises of mild Benjamin.
Heaven shield him from mishap and snare!
But why so early with this prayer? —
Is it for threatenings in the sky?
Or for some other danger nigh?
No, none is near him yet, though he
Be one of much infirmity;
For at the bottom of the Brow,
Where once the DOVE and OLIVE-BOUGH
Offered a greeting of good ale
To all who entered Grasmere Vale;

And called on him who must depart
To leave it with a jovial heart ; —
There, where the DOVE and OLIVE-BOUGH
Once hung, a Poet harbours now, —
A simple water-drinking Bard ;
Why need our Hero then (though frail
His best resolves) be on his guard? —
He marches by, secure and bold, —
Yet while he thinks on times of old,
It seems that all looks wondrous cold ;
He shrugs his shoulders — shakes his head —
And, for the honest folk within,
It is a doubt with Benjamin
Whether they be alive or dead !

Here is no danger, — none at all !
Beyond his wish is he secure ;
But pass a mile — and *then* for trial, —
Then for the pride of self denial ;
If he resist that tempting door,
Which with such friendly voice will call,
If he resist those casement panes,
And that bright gleam which thence will fall
Upon his Leaders' bells and manes,
Inviting him with cheerful lure :
For still, though all be dark elsewhere,
Some shining notice will be *there*,
Of open house and ready fare.

The place to Benjamin full well
Is known, and by as strong a spell
As used to be that sign of love
And hope — the OLIVE-BOUGH and DOVE ;

He knows it to his cost, good Man!
Who does not know the famous SWAN?
Uncouth although the object be,
An image of perplexity;
Yet not the less it is our boast,
For it was painted by the Host;
His own conceit the figure planned,
'T was coloured all by his own hand
And that frail Child of thirsty clay,
Of whom I sing this rustic lay,
Could tell with self-dissatisfaction
Quaint stories of the Bird's attraction!*

Well! that is past — and in despite
Of open door and shining light.
And now the Conqueror essays
The long ascent of Dunmail-raise;
And with his Team is gentle here
As when he clomb from Rydal Mere;
His whip they do not dread — his voice
They only hear it to rejoice.
To stand or go is at *their* pleasure;
Their efforts and their time they measure
By generous pride within the breast;
And, while they strain, and while they rest,
He thus pursues his thoughts at leisure.

Now am I fairly safe to-night —
And never was my heart more light,
I trespassed lately worse than ever —
But Heaven will bless a good endeavour;

* This rude piece of self-taught art (such is the progress of refinement) has been supplanted by a professional production.

And, to my soul's delight, I find
The evil One is left behind.
Yes, let my master fume and fret,
Here am I — with my Horses yet!
My jolly Team, he finds that ye
Will work for nobody but me!
Good proof of this the Country gained,
One day, when ye were vexed and strained —
Entrusted to another's care,
And forced unworthy stripes to bear.
Here was it — on this rugged spot
Which now, contented with our lot,
We climb — that, piteously abused,
Ye plunged in anger and confused:
As chance would have it, passing by
I saw you in your jeopardy:
A word from me was like a charm —
The ranks were taken with one mind;
And your huge burthen, safe from harm,
Moved like a vessel in the wind!
— Yes, without me, up hills so high
'Tis vain to strive for mastery.
Then grieve not, jolly Team! though tough
The road we travel, steep and rough,
Though Rydal-heights and Dunmail-raise,
And all their fellow Banks and Braes,
Full often make you stretch and strain,
And halt for breath and halt again,
Yet to their sturdiness 'tis owing
That side by side we still are going!

While Benjamin in earnest mood
His meditations thus pursued,

A storm, which had been smothered long,
Was growing inwardly more strong;
And, in its struggles to get free,
Was busily employed as he.
The thunder had begun to growl —
He heard not, too intent of soul;
The air was now without a breath —
He marked not that 'twas still as death.
But soon large drops upon his head
Fell with the weight of drops of lead; —
He starts — and, at the admonition,
Takes a survey of his condition.
The road is black before his eyes,
Glimmering faintly where it lies;
Black is the sky — and every hill,
Up to the sky, is blacker still —
A huge and melancholy room,
Hung round and overhung with gloom?
Save that above a single height
Is to be seen a lurid light,
Above Helm-crag* — a streak half dead,
A burning of portentous red;
And near that lurid light, full well
The ASTROLOGER, sage Sidrophel,
Where at his desk and book he sits,
Puzzling on high his curious wits;
He whose domain is held in common
With no one but the ANCIENT WOMAN,
Cowering beside her rifted cell;
As if intent on magic spell; —

* A mountain of Grasmere, the broken summit of which presents two figures, full as distinctly shaped as that of the famous Cobbler, near Arroquhar in Scotland.

Dread pair, that, spite of wind and weather,
Still sit upon Helm-crag together!

The ASTROLOGER was not unseen
By solitary Benjamin:
But total darkness came anon,
And he and every thing was gone,
And suddenly a ruffling breeze,
(That would have sounded through the trees
Had aught of sylvan growth been there)
Was felt throughout the region bare:
The rain rushed down — the road was battered,
As with the force of billows shattered;
The horses are dismayed, nor know
Whether they should stand or go;
And Benjamin is groping near them,
Sees nothing, and can scarcely hear them.
He is astounded, — wonder not, —
With such a charge in such a spot;
Astounded in the mountain gap
By peals of thunder, clap on clap!
And many a terror-striking flash; —
And somewhere, as it seems, a crash,
Among the rocks; with weight of rain,
And sullen motions long and slow,
That to a dreary distance go —
Till, breaking in upon the dying strain,
A rending o'er his head begins the fray again.

Meanwhile, uncertain what to do,
And oftentimes compelled to halt,
The horses cautiously pursue
Their way, without mishap or fault;

And now have reached that pile of stones,
Heaped over brave King Dunmail's bones;
He who had once supreme command,
Last king of rocky Cumberland;
His bones, and those of all his Power,
Slain here in a disastrous hour!

When, passing through this narrow strait,
Stony, and dark, and desolate,
Benjamin can faintly hear
A voice that comes from some one near,
A female voice: — "Whoe'er you be,
Stop," it exclaimed, "and pity me."
And, less in pity than in wonder,
Amid the darkness and the thunder,
The Waggoner, with prompt command,
Summons his horses to a stand.

The voice, to move commiseration,
Prolonged its earnest supplication —
"This storm that beats so furiously —
This dreadful place! oh pity me!"

While this was said, with sobs between,
And many tears by one unseen;
There came a flash — a startling glare,
And all Seat-Sandal was laid bare!
'Tis not a time for nice suggestion,
And Benjamin, without further question,
Taking her for some way-worn rover,
Said, "Mount, and get you under cover!"

Another voice, in tone as hoarse
As a swoln brook with rugged course,

Cried out, "Good brother, why so fast?
I've had a glimpse of you — *avast!*
Or, since it suits you to be civil,
Take her at once — for good and evil!"

"It is my Husband," softly said
The Woman, as if half afraid:
By this time she was snug within,
Through help of honest Benjamin;
She and her Babe, which to her breast
With thankfulness the Mother pressed;
And now the same strong voice more near
Said cordially, "My Friend, what cheer?
Rough doings these! as God's my judge,
The sky owes somebody a grudge!
We've had in half an hour or less
A twelvemonth's terror and distress!"

Then Benjamin entreats the Man
Would mount, too, quickly as he can:
The Sailor, Sailor now no more,
But such he had been heretofore,
To courteous Benjamin replied,
"Go you your way, and mind not me;
For I must have, whate'er betide,
My Ass and fifty things beside, —
Go, and I'll follow speedily!"

The Waggon moves — and with its load
Descends along the sloping road;
And to a little tent hard by
Turns the Sailor instantly;
For when, at closing-in of day,
The Family had come that way,

Green pasture and the soft warm air
Had tempted them to settle there. —
Green is the grass for beast to graze,
Around the stones of Dunmail-raise!

The Sailor gathers up his bed,
Takes down the canvass overhead;
And, after farewell to the place,
A parting word — though not of grace,
Pursues, with Ass and all his store,
The way the Waggon went before.

CANTO SECOND.

IF Wytheburn's modest House of Prayer,
As lowly as the lowliest Dwelling,
Had, with its belfry's humble stock,
A little pair that hang in air,
Been mistress also of a Clock,
(And one, too, not in crazy plight)
Twelve strokes that Clock would have been telling
Under the brow of old Helvellyn —
Its bead-roll of midnight,
Then, when the Hero of my tale
Was passing by, and down the vale
(The vale now silent, hushed I ween
As if a storm had never been)
Proceeding with an easy mind;
While he, who had been left behind,
Intent to use his utmost haste,
Gained ground upon the Waggon fast,

And gives another lusty cheer;
For spite of rumbling of the wheels,
A welcome greeting he can hear; —
It is a fiddle in its glee
Dinning from the CHERRY TREE!

Thence the sound — the light is there —
As Benjamin is now aware,
Who, to his inward thoughts confined,
Had almost reached the festive door,
When, startled by the Sailor's roar,
He hears a sound and sees the light,
And in a moment calls to mind
That 'tis the village MERRY-NIGHT!*

Although before in no dejection,
At this insidious recollection
His heart with sudden joy is filled, —
His ears are by the music thrilled,
His eyes take pleasure in the road
Glittering before him bright and broad;
And Benjamin is wet and cold,
And there are reasons manifold
That make the good, tow'rds which he's yearning,
Look fairly like a lawful earning.

Nor has thought time to come and go,
To vibrate between yes and no;
“For,” cries the Sailor, “Glorious chance
That blew us hither! Let him dance

* A term well known in the North of England, and applied to rural Festivals where young persons meet in the evening for the purpose of dancing.

Who can or will; — my honest Soul,
Our treat shall be a friendly Bowl!"
He draws him to the door — "Come in,
Come, come," cries he to Benjamin;
And Benjamin — ah, woe is me!
Gave the word, — the horses heard
And halted, though reluctantly.

"Blithe souls and lightsome hearts have we,
Feasting at the CHERRY TREE!"
This was the outside proclamation,
This was the inside salutation;
What bustling — jostling — high and low!
A universal overflow!
What tankards foaming from the tap!
What store of cakes in every lap!
What thumping — stumping — overhead!
The thunder had not been more busy:
With such a stir, you would have said,
This little place may well be dizzy!
'Tis who can dance with greatest vigour —
'Tis what can be most prompt and eager; —
As if it heard the fiddle's call,
The pewter clatters on the wall;
The very bacon shows its feeling,
Swinging from the smoky ceiling!

A steaming Bowl — a blazing fire —
What greater good can heart desire?
'Twere worth a wise man's while to try
The utmost anger of the sky;
To *seek* for thoughts of painful cast,
If such be the amends at last.

Now should you think I judge amiss,
The CHERRY TREE shows proof of this;
For soon, of all the happy there,
Our Travellers are the happiest pair.
All care with Benjamin is gone —
A Cæsar past the Rubicon!
He thinks not of his long, long strife; —
The Sailor, Man by nature gay,
Hath no resolves to throw away;
And he hath now forgot his Wife,
Hath quite forgotten her — or may be
Deems that she is happier, laid
Within that warm and peaceful bed;
 Under cover,
 Terror over,
Sleeping by her sleeping Baby.

 With bowl in hand,
 (It may not stand)
Gladdest of the gladsome band,
Amid their own delight and fun,
They hear — when every dance is done —
They hear — when every fit is o'er —
The fiddle's *squeak** — that call to bliss,
Ever followed by a kiss;
They envy not the happy lot,
But enjoy their own the more!

While thus our jocund Travellers fare,
Up springs the Sailor from his chair —

* At the close of each strathspey, or jig, a particular note from the fiddle summons the Rustic to the agreeable duty of saluting his Partner.

Limps (for I might have told before
That he was lame) across the floor —
Is gone — returns — and with a prize;
With what? — a Ship of lusty size;
A gallant stately Man of War,
Fixed on a smoothly-sliding car.
Surprise to all, but most surprise
To Benjamin, who rubs his eyes,
Not knowing that he had befriended
A Man so gloriously attended!

“This,” cries the Sailor, “a Third-rate is —
Stand back, and you shall see her gratis!
This was the Flag-Ship at the Nile,
The Vanguard — you may smirk and smile,
But, pretty Maid, if you look near,
You’ll find you’ve much in little here!
A nobler Ship did never swim,
And you shall see her in full trim:
I’ll set, my Friends, to do you honour,
Set every inch of sail upon her.”
So said, so done; and masts, sails, yards,
He names them all; and interlards —
His speech with uncouth terms of art,
Accomplished in the Showman’s part;
And then, as from a sudden check,
Cries out — “’Tis there, the Quarter-deck
On which brave Admiral Nelson stood —
A sight that would have roused your blood!
One eye he had, which, bright as ten,
Burnt like a fire among his men;
Let this be Land, and that be Sea,
Here lay the French — and *thus* came we!”

Hushed was by this the fiddle's sound,
The Dancers all were gathered round,
And, such the stillness of the house,
You might have heard a nibbling mouse;
While, borrowing helps where'er he may,
The Sailor through the story runs
Of Ships to Ships and guns to guns;
And does his utmost to display
The dismal conflict, and the might
And terror of that wondrous night!
"A Bowl, a Bowl of double measure,"
Cries Benjamin, "a draught of length,
To Nelson, England's pride and treasure,
Her bulwark and her tower of strength!
When Benjamin had seized the bowl,
The Mastiff, from beneath the waggon,
Where he lay, watchful as a dragon,
Rattled his chain — 'twas all in vain,
For Benjamin, triumphant soul!
He heard the monitory growl;
Heard — and in opposition quaffed
A deep, determined, desperate draught!
Nor did the battered Tar forget,
Or flinch from what he deemed his debt:
Then, like a hero crowned with laurel,
Back to her place the ship he led;
Wheeled her back in full apparel;
And so, flag flying at mast head,
Re-yoked her to the Ass: — anon,
Cries Benjamin, "We must be gone."
Thus, after two hours' hearty stay,
Again behold them on their way!

CANTO THIRD.

RIGHT gladly had the horses stirred,
When they the wished-for greeting heard,
The whip's loud notice from the door,
That they were free to move once more.
You think, these doings must have bred
In them disheartening doubts and dread;
No, not a horse of all the eight,
Although it be a moonless night,
Fears either for himself or freight;
For this they know (and let it hide,
In part, the offences of their Guide)
That Benjamin, with clouded brains,
Is worth the best with all their pains;
And, if they had a prayer to make,
The prayer would be that they may take
With him whatever comes in course,
The better fortune or the worse;
That no one else may have business near them,
And, drunk or sober, he may steer them.

So, forth in dauntless mood they fare,
And with them goes the guardian pair.

Now, heroes, for the true commotion,
The triumph of your late devotion!
Can aught on earth impede delight,
Still mounting to a higher height;
And higher still — a greedy flight!
Can any low-born care pursue her,
Can any mortal clog come to her?

No notion have they — not a thought,
That is from joyless regions brought!
And, while they coast the silent lake,
Their inspiration I partake;
Share their empyreal spirits — yea,
With their enraptured vision, see —
O fancy — what a jubilee!
What shifting pictures — clad in gleams
Of colour bright as feverish dreams!
Earth, spangled sky, and lake serene,
Involved and restless all — a scene
Pregnant with mutual exaltation,
Rich change, and multiplied creation!
This sight to me the Muse imparts; —
And then, what kindness in their hearts!
What tears of rapture, what vow-making,
Profound entreaties, and hand-shaking!
What solemn, vacant, interlacing,
As if they'd fall asleep embracing!
Then, in the turbulence of glee,
And in the excess of amity,
Says Benjamin, "That ass of thine,
He spoils thy sport, and hinders mine:
If he were tethered to the Waggon,
He'd drag as well what he is dragging;
And we, as brother should with brother,
Might trudge it alongside each other!"

Forthwith, obedient to command,
The horses made a quiet stand;
And to the Waggon's skirts was tied
The Creature, by the Mastiff's side,
(The Mastiff not well pleased to be
So very near such company.)

This new arrangement made, the Wain
Through the still night proceeds again;
No Moon hath risen her light to lend;
But indistinctly may be kenned
The VANGUARD, following close behind,
Sails spread, as if to catch the wind!

“Thy Wife and Child are snug and warm,
Thy Ship will travel without harm;
I like,” said Benjamin, “her shape and stature:
And this of mine — this bulky Creature
Of which I have the steering — this,
Seen fairly, is not much amiss!
We want your streamers, Friend, you know;
But, altogether, as we go,
We make a kind of handsome show!
Among these hills, from first to last,
We’ve weathered many a furious blast;
Hard passage forcing on, with head
Against the storm, and canvass spread.
I hate a boaster — but to thee
Will say’t, who knowest both land and sea,
The unluckiest Hulk that sails the brine
Is hardly worse beset than mine,
When cross winds on her quarter beat;
And, fairly lifted from my feet,
I stagger onward — Heaven knows how —
But not so pleasantly as now —
Poor Pilot I, by snows confounded,
And many a foundrous pit surrounded!
Yet here we are, by night and day
Grinding through rough and smooth our way,
Through foul and fair our task fulfilling;
And long shall be so yet — God willing!”

“Ay,” said the Tar, “through fair and foul —
But save us from yon screeching Owl!”
That instant was begun a fray
Which called their thoughts another way:
The Mastiff, ill-conditioned carl!
What must he do but growl and snarl,
Still more and more dissatisfied
With the meek comrade at his side!
Till, not incensed though put to proof,
The Ass, uplifting a hind hoof,
Salutes the Mastiff on the head;
And so were better manners bred,
And all was calmed and quieted.

“Yon Screech-owl,” says the Sailor, turning
Back to his former cause of mourning,
“Yon Owl! — pray God that all be well!
'Tis worse than any funeral bell;
As sure as I've the gift of sight,
We shall be meeting Ghosts to-night!”
— Said Benjamin, “This whip shall lay
A thousand, if they cross our way.
I know that Wanton's noisy station,
I know him and his occupation;
The jolly Bird hath learned his cheer
On the banks of Windermere;
Where a tribe of them make merry,
Mocking the Man that keeps the Ferry;
Hallooing from an open throat,
Like Travellers shouting for a Boat.
— The tricks he learned at Windermere
This vagrant Owl is playing here —
That is the worst of his employment:
He's in the height of his enjoyment!”

— This explanation stilled the alarm,
Cured the foreboder like a charm;
This, and the manner, and the voice,
Summoned the Sailor to rejoice;
His heart is up — he fears no evil
From life or death, from man or devil;
He wheeled — and, making many stops,
Brandished his crutch against the mountain tops;
And, while he talked of blows and scars,
Benjamin, among the stars,
Beheld a dancing — and a glancing;
Such retreating and advancing
As, I ween, was never seen
In bloodiest battle since the days of Mars!

CANTO FOURTH.

THUS they, with freaks of proud delight,
Beguile the remnant of the night;
And many a snatch of jovial song
Regales them as they wind along;
While to the music, from on high.
The echoes make a glad reply. —
But the sage Muse the revel heeds
No farther than her story needs;
Nor will she servilely attend
The loitering journey to its end.
— Blithe Spirits of her own impel
The Muse, who scents the morning air,
To take of this transported Pair
A brief and unreproved farewell;
To quit the slow-paced Waggon's side,
And wander down yon hawthorn dell,

With murmuring Greta for her guide.
— There doth she ken the awful form
Of Raven-crag — black as a storm —
Glimmering through the twilight pale;
And Gimmer-crag*, his tall twin brother,
Each peering forth to meet the other: —
And, while she roves through St. John's Vale,
Along the smooth unpathwayed plain,
By sheep-track or through cottage lane,
Where no disturbance comes to intrude
Upon the pensive solitude,
Her unsuspecting eye, perchance,
With the rude Shepherd's favoured glance,
Beholds the Faeries in array,
Whose party-coloured garments gay
The silent company betray;
Red, green, and blue; a moment's sight!
For Skiddaw-top with rosy light
Is touched — and all the band take flight.
— Fly also, Muse! and from the dell
Mount to the ridge of Nathdale Fell;
Thence, look thou forth o'er wood and lawn
Hoar with the frost-like dews of dawn;
Across yon meadowy bottom look,
Where close fogs hide their parent brook;
And see, beyond that hamlet small,
The ruined towers of Threlkeld-hall,
Lurking in a double shade,
By trees and lingering twilight made!
There, at Blencathara's rugged feet,
Sir Lancelot gave a safe retreat

* The crag of the ewe lamb.

To noble Clifford; from annoy
Concealed the persecuted Boy,
Well pleased in rustic garb to feed
His flock, and pipe on Shepherd's reed;
Among this multitude of hills,
Crag, woodlands, waterfalls, and rills;
Which soon the morning shall enfold,
From east to west, in ample vest
Of massy gloom and radiance bold.

The mists, that o'er the Streamlet's bed
Hung low, begin to rise and spread;
Even while I speak, their skirts of grey
Are smitten by a silver ray;
And lo! — up Castrigg's naked steep
(Where, smoothly urged, the vapours sweep
Along — and scatter and divide,
Like fleecy clouds self-multiplied)
The stately Waggon is ascending,
With faithful Benjamin attending,
Apparent now beside his team —
Now lost amid a glittering steam.
And with him goes his Sailor Friend,
By this time near their journey's end,
And, after their high-minded riot,
Sickenings into thoughtful quiet;
As if the morning's pleasant hour
Had for their joys a killing power.

They are drooping, weak, and dull;
But the horses stretch and pull;
With increasing vigour climb,
Eager to repair lost time;

Whether, by their own desert,
Knowing there is cause for shame,
They are labouring to avert
At least a portion of the blame,
Which full surely will alight
Upon *his* head, whom, in despite
Of all his faults, they love the best;
Whether for him they are distress;
Or, by length of fasting roused,
Are impatient to be housed;
Up against the hill they strain —
Tugging at the iron chain —
Tugging all with might and main —
Last and foremost, every horse
To the utmost of his force!
And the smoke and respiration
Rising like an exhalation,
Blends with the mist — a moving shroud,
To form — an undissolving cloud;
Which, with slant ray, the merry sun
Takes delight to play upon.
Never Venus or Apollo,
Pleased a favourite chief to follow
Through accidents of peace or war,
In a time of peril threw,
Round the object of his care,
Veil of such celestial hue;
Interposed so bright a screen
Him and his enemies between!

Alas! what boots it? — who can hide
When the malicious Fates are bent
On working out an ill intent?
Can destiny be turned aside?

No — sad progress of my story!
Benjamin, this outward glory
Cannot shield thee from thy Master,
Who from Keswick has pricked forth,
Sour and surly as the north;
And, in fear of some disaster,
Comes to give what help he may,
Or to hear what thou canst say;
If, as needs he must forebode,
Thou hast loitered on the road!
His doubts — his fears may now take flight —
The wished-for object is in sight;
Yet, trust the Muse, it rather hath
Stirred him up to livelier wrath;
Which he stifles, moody man!
With all the patience that he can;
To the end that, at your meeting,
He may give thee decent greeting.

There he is — resolved to stop,
Till the Waggon gains the top;
But stop he cannot — must advance:
Him Benjamin, with lucky glance,
Espies — and instantly is ready,
Self-collected, poised, and steady;
And, to be the better seen,
Issues from his radiant shroud,
From his close-attending cloud,
With careless air and open mien.
Erect his port, and firm his going;
So struts yon Cock that now is crowing;
And the morning light in grace
Strikes upon his lifted face,

Hurrying the pallid hue away
That might his trespasses betray.
But what can all avail to clear him,
Or what need of explanation,
Parley or interrogation?
For the Master sees, alas!
That unhappy Figure near him,
Limping o'er the dewy grass,
Where the road it fringes, sweet,
Soft and cool to way-worn feet;
And, O indignity! an Ass,
By his noble Mastiff's side,
Tethered to the Waggon's tail:
And the Ship, in all her pride,
Following after in full sail!
Not to speak of Babe and Mother;
Who, contented with each other,
And snug as birds in leafy arbour,
Find, within, a blessed harbour!

With eager eyes the Master pries;
Looks in and out — and through and through;
Says nothing — till at last he spies
A wound upon the Mastiff's head,
A wound — where plainly might be read
What feats an Ass's hoof can do!
But drop the rest: — this aggravation,
This complicated provocation,
A hoard of grievances unsealed;
All past forgiveness it repealed; —
And thus, and through distempered blood
On both sides, Benjamin the good,
The patient, and the tender-hearted,
Was from his Team and Waggon parted;

When duty of that day was o'er,
Laid down his whip — and served no more. —
Nor could the Waggon long survive
Which Benjamin had ceased to drive:
It lingered on; — Guide after Guide
Ambitiously the office tried;
But each unmanageable hill
Called for *his* patience and *his* skill; —
And sure it is, that through this night,
And what the morning brought to light,
Two losses had we to sustain,
We lost both WAGGONER and WAIN!

Accept, O Friend, for praise or blame,
The gift of this adventurous song;
A record which I dared to frame,
Though timid scruples checked me long;
They checked me — and I left the theme
Untouched — in spite of many a gleam
Of fancy which thereon was shed,
Like pleasant sunbeams shifting still
Upon the side of a distant hill:
But Nature might not be gainsaid;
For what I have and what I miss
I sing of these — it makes my bliss!
Nor is it I who play the part,
But a shy spirit in my heart,
That comes and goes — will sometimes leap
From hiding-places ten years' deep;
Or haunts me with familiar face —
Returning, like a ghost unlaid,
Until the debt I owe be paid.

Forgive me, then; for I had been
On friendly terms with this Machine:
In him, while he was wont to trace
Our roads, through many a long year's space,
A living Almanack had we;
We had a speaking Diary,
That, in this uneventful place,
Gave to the days a mark and name
By which we knew them when they came.
— Yes, I, and all about me here,
Through all the changes of the year,
Had seen him through the mountains go,
In pomp of mist or pomp of snow,
Majestically huge and slow:
Or, with milder grace adorning
The Landscape of a summer's morning;
While Grasmere smoothed her liquid plain
The moving image to detain;
And mighty Fairfield, with a chime
Of echoes, to his march kept time;
When little other business stirred,
And little other sound was heard;
In that delicious hour of balm,
Stillness, solitude, and calm,
While yet the Valley is arrayed,
On this side with a sober shade;
On that is prodigally bright —
Crag, lawn, and wood — with rosy light. —
But most of all, thou lordly Wain!
I wish to have thee here again,
When windows flap and chimney roars,
And all is dismal out of doors;

And, sitting by my fire, I see
Eight sorry Carts, no less a train!
Unworthy Successors of thee,
Come straggling through the wind and rain:
And oft, as they pass slowly on,
Beneath my window — one by one —
See, perched upon the naked height
The summit of a cumbrous freight,
A single Traveller — and there
Another — then perhaps a Pair —
The lame, the sickly, and the old;
Men, Women, heartless with the cold;
And Babes in wet and starveling plight;
Which once, be weather as it might,
Had still a nest within a nest,
Thy shelter — and their Mother's breast!
Then most of all, then far the most,
Do I regret what we have lost;
Am grieved for that unhappy sin
Which robbed us of good Benjamin; —
And of his stately Charge, which none
Could keep alive when he was gone!

POEMS OF THE FANCY.

I.

A MORNING EXERCISE.

FANCY, who leads the pastimes of the glad,
 Full oft is pleased a wayward dart to throw;
 Sending sad shadows after things not sad,
 Peopling the harmless fields with signs of woe:
 Beneath her sway, a simple forest cry
 Becomes an echo of Man's misery.

Blithe Ravens croak of death; and when the Owl
 Tries his two voices for a favourite strain —
Tu-whit — Tu-whoo! the unsuspecting fowl
 Forebodes mishap, or seems but to complain;
 Fancy, intent to harass and annoy,
 Can thus pervert the evidence of joy.

Through border wilds where naked Indians stray,
 Myriads of notes attest her subtle skill;
 A feathered Task-master cries, "WORK AWAY!"
 And, in thy iteration, "WHIP POOR WILL*,"
 Is heard the Spirit of a toil-worn Slave,
 Lashed out of life, not quiet in the grave!

What wonder? at her bidding, ancient lays
 Steeped in dire griefs the voice of Philomel;
 And that fleet Messenger of summer days,
 The Swallow, twittered subject to like spell;
 But ne'er could Fancy bend the buoyant Lark
 To melancholy service — hark! O hark!

* See Waterton's Wanderings in South America.

The daisy sleeps upon the dewy lawn,
Not lifting yet the head that evening bowed ;
But *He* is risen, a later star of dawn,
Glittering and twinkling near yon rosy cloud ;
Bright gem instinct with music, vocal spark ;
The happiest Bird that sprang out of the Ark !

Hail, blest above all kinds ! — Supremely skilled
Restless with fixed to balance, high with low,
Thou leav'st the Halcyon free her hopes to build
On such forbearance as the deep may show ;
Perpetual flight, unchecked by earthly ties,
Leavest to the wandering Bird of Paradise.

Faithful, though swift as lightning, the meek Dove ;
Yet more hath Nature reconciled in thee ;
So constant with thy downward eye of love,
Yet, in aerial singleness, so free ;
So humble, yet so ready to rejoice
In power of wing and never-wearied voice !

How would it please old Ocean to partake,
With Sailors longing for a breeze in vain,
The harmony that thou best lovest to make
Where earth resembles most his blank domain !
Urania's self might welcome with pleased ear
These matins mounting towards her native sphere.

Chanter by Heaven attracted, whom no bars
To day-light known deter from that pursuit,
'Tis well that some sage instinct, when the stars
Come forth at evening, keeps Thee still and mute ;
For not an eyelid could to sleep incline
Wert thou among them singing as they shine !

II.

TO THE DAISY.

" Her * divine skill taught me this,
 That from every thing I saw
 I could some instruction draw,
 And raise pleasure to the height
 Through the meanest object's sight.
 By the murmur of a spring,
 Or the least bough's rustelling ;
 By a Daisy whose leaves spread
 Shut when Titan goes to bed ;
 Or a shady bush or tree ;
 She could more infuse in me
 Than all Nature's beauties can
 In some other wiser man."

G. WITHERS.

IN youth from rock to rock I went,
 From hill to hill in discontent
 Of pleasure high and turbulent,
 Most pleased when most uneasy ;
 But now my own delights I make, —
 My thirst at every rill can slake,
 And gladly Nature's love partake
 Of thee, sweet Daisy !

When Winter decks his few grey hairs,
 Thee in the scanty wreath he wears ;
 Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
 That she may sun thee ;

* His muse.

Whole summer fields are thine by right;
And Autumn, melancholy Wight!
Doth in thy crimson head delight
 When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greetest the Traveller in the lane;
If welcome once thou countest it gain;
 Thou art not daunted,
Nor carest if thou be set at naught:
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
 When such are wanted.

Be Violets in their secret mews
The flowers the wanton Zephyrs choose;
Proud be the Rose, with rains and dew
 Her head impearling;
Thou livest with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame;
Thou art indeed by many a claim
 The Poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
 Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art! — a Friend at hand, to scare
 His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,

Have I derived from thy sweet power
Some apprehension;
Some steady love; some brief delight;
Some memory that had taken flight;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right;
Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to Thee should turn,
I drink out of an humbler urn
A lowlier pleasure;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life, our nature breeds;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.

When, smitten by the morning ray,
I see thee rise, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower! my spirits play
With kindred gladness:
And when, at dusk, by dews opprest
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing;
An instinct call it, a blind sense;
A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
Nor whither going.

Child of the Year! that round dost run
Thy course, bold lover of the sun,
And cheerful when the day's begun
 As morning Leveret,
Thy long-lost praise* thou shalt regain;
Dear shalt thou be to future men
As in old time; — thou not in vain
 Art Nature's favourite.

III.

A WHIRL-BLAST from behind the hill
Rushed o'er the wood with startling sound;
Then — all at once the air was still,
And showers of hailstones pattered round.
Where leafless Oaks towered high above,
I sat within an undergrove
Of tallest hollies, tall and green;
A fairer bower was never seen.
From year to year the spacious floor
With withered leaves is covered o'er,
And all the year the bower is green.
But see! where'er the hailstones drop
The withered leaves all skip and hop;
There's not a breeze — no breath of air —
Yet here, and there, and every where
Along the floor, beneath the shade
By those embowering hollies made,
The leaves in myriads jump and spring,

* See, in Chaucer and the elder Poets, the honours formerly paid to this flower.

As if with pipes and music rare
Some Robin Good-fellow were there,
And all those leaves, in festive glee,
Were dancing to the minstrelsy.

IV.

THE GREEN LINNET.

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my Orchard-seat!
And Birds and Flowers once more to greet,
My last year's Friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest Guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion,
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May,
And this is thy dominion.

While Birds, and Butterflies, and Flowers,
Make all one Band of Paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment ;

A Life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair,
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Upon yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight the Bird deceives,
A Brother of the dancing Leaves;
Then flits, and from the Cottage eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

V.

THE CONTRAST.

THE PARROT AND THE WREN.

I.

WITHIN her gilded cage confined,
I saw a dazzling Belle,
A Parrot of that famous kind
Whose name is NON-PAREIL.

Like beads of glossy jet her eyes ;
And, smoothed by Nature's skill,
With pearl or gleaming agate vies
Her finely-curved bill.

Her plummy Mantle's living hues
In mass opposed to mass,
Outshine the splendour that imbues
The robes of pictured glass.

And, sooth to say, an apter Mate
Did never tempt the choice
Of feathered Thing most delicate
In figure and in voice.

But, exiled from Australian Bowers,
And singleness her lot,
She trills her song with tutored powers,
Or mocks each casual note.

No more of pity for regrets
With which she may have striven !
Now but in wantonness she frets,
Or spite, if cause be given ;

Arch, volatile, a sportive Bird
By social glee inspired ;
Ambitious to be seen or heard,
And pleased to be admired !

II.

This moss-lined shed, green, soft, and dry,
Harbours a self-contented Wren,
Not shunning man's abode, though shy,
Almost as thought itself, of human ken.

Strange places, coverts unendeared
She never tried ; the very nest
In which this Child of Spring was reared,
Is warmed, thro' winter, by her feathery breast.

To the bleak winds she sometimes gives
A slender unexpected strain ;
That tells the Hermitess still lives,
Though she appear not, and be sought in vain.

Say, Dora ! tell me by yon placid Moon,
If called to choose between the favoured pair,
Which would you be, — the Bird of the Saloon,
By Lady fingers tended with nice care,
Caressed, applauded, upon dainties fed,
Or Nature's DARKLING of this mossy Shed ?

VI.

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE.*

PANSIES, Lilies, Kingcups, Daisies,
Let them live upon their praises ;
Long as there's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory ;
Long as there are Violets,
They will have a place in story :
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star ;

* Common Pilewort.

Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout !
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little flower! — I'll make a stir,
Like a great Astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an Elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself ;
Since we needs must first have met
I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
'Twas a face I did not know ;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the Thrush
Has a thought about her nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless Prodigal ;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood !
Travel with the multitude :
Never heed them ; I aver
That they all are wanton Wooers ;
But the thrifty Cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home ;
Spring is coming, Thou art come !

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming Spirit!
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane — there's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow Flowers,
Children of the flaring hours!
Buttercups, that will be seen,
Whether we will see or no;
Others, too, of lofty mien;
They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine!

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Scorned and slighted upon earth;
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Singing at my heart's command,
In the lanes my thoughts pursuing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love!

VII.

TO THE SAME FLOWER.

PLEASURES newly found are sweet
When they lie about our feet :
February last, my heart
First at sight of thee was glad ;
All unheard of as thou art,
Thou must needs, I think, have had,
Celandine ! and long ago,
Praise of which I nothing know.

I have not a doubt but he,
Whosoe'er the man might be,
Who the first with pointed rays
(Workman worthy to be sainted)
Set the Sign-board in a blaze,
When the risen sun he painted,
Took the fancy from a glance
At thy glittering countenance.

Soon as gentle breezes bring
News of winter's vanishing,
And the children build their bowers,
Sticking 'kerchief-plots of mould
All about with full-blown flowers,
Thick as sheep in shepherd's fold !
With the proudest thou art there,
Mantling in the tiny square.

Often have I sighed to measure
By myself a lonely pleasure,

Sighed to think, I read a book
Only read, perhaps, by me;
Yet I long could overlook
Thy bright coronet and Thee,
And thy arch and wily ways,
And thy store of other praise.

Blithe of heart, from week to week
Thou dost play at hide-and-seek;
While the patient Primrose sits
Like a Beggar in the cold,
Thou, a Flower of wiser wits,
Slippest into thy sheltering hold;
Bright as any of the train
When ye all are out again.

Thou art not beyond the moon,
But a thing "beneath our shoon:"
Let the bold Adventurer thrid
In his bark the polar sea;
Rear who will a pyramid;
Praise it is enough for me,
If there be but three or four
Who will love my little Flower.

VIII.

THE WATERFALL AND THE EGLANTINE.

"BEGONE, thou fond presumptuous Elf,"
Exclaimed a thundering Voice,
"Nor dare to thrust thy foolish self
Between me and my choice!"

A small Cascade fresh swoln with snows
Thus threatened a poor Briar-rose,
That, all bespattered with his foam,
And dancing high and dancing low,
Was living, as a child might know,
In an unhappy home.

“Dost thou presume my course to block?
Off, off! or, puny Thing!
I’ll hurl thee headlong with the rock
To which thy fibres cling.”
The Flood was tyrannous and strong;
The patient Briar suffered long,
Nor did he utter groan or sigh,
Hoping the danger would be past:
But, seeing no relief, at last
He ventured to reply.

“Ah!” said the Briar, “blame me not;
Why should we dwell in strife?
We who in this sequestered spot
Once lived a happy life!
You stirred me on my rocky bed —
What pleasure through my veins you spread!
The Summer long, from day to day,
My leaves you freshened and bedewed;
Nor was it common gratitude
That did your cares repay.

“When Spring came on with bud and bell,
Among these rocks did I
Before you hang my wreaths, to tell
That gentle days were nigh!
And in the sultry summer hours,
I sheltered you with leaves and flowers;

And in my leaves — now shed and gone,
The Linnet lodged, and for us two
Chanted his pretty songs, when You
Had little voice or none.

“ But now proud thoughts are in your breast —
What grief is mine you see.
Ah ! would you think, even yet how blest
Together we might be !
Though of both leaf and flower bereft,
Some ornaments to me are left —
Rich store of scarlet hips is mine,
With which I, in my humble way,
Would deck you many a winter’s day,
A happy Eglantine !”

What more he said I cannot tell,
The Torrent thundered down the dell
With aggravated haste ;
I listened, nor aught else could hear ;
The Briar quaked — and much I fear
Those accents were his last.

IX.

THE OAK AND THE BROOM.

A PASTORAL.

His simple truths did Andrew glean
Beside the babbling rills ;
A careful student he had been
Among the woods and hills.

One winter's night, when through the trees
The wind was roaring, on his knees
His youngest born did Andrew hold :
And while the rest, a ruddy quire,
Were seated round their blazing fire,
This Tale the Shepherd told.

“ I saw a crag, a lofty stone
As ever tempest beat !
Out of its head an Oak had grown,
A Broom out of its feet.
The time was March, a cheerful noon —
The thaw-wind, with the breath of June,
Breathed gently from the warm south-west :
When, in a voice sedate with age,
This Oak, a giant and a sage,
His neighbour thus addressed : —

‘ Eight weary weeks, through rock and clay,
Along this mountain's edge,
The Frost hath wrought both night and day,
Wedge driving after wedge.
Look up ! and think, above your head
What trouble, surely, will be bred ;
Last night I heard a crash — 'tis true,
The splinters took another road —
I see them yonder — what a load
For such a Thing as you !

You are preparing, as before,
To deck your slender shape ;
And yet, just three years back — no more —
You had a strange escape.

Down from yon cliff a fragment broke;
It thundered down, with fire and smoke,
And hitherward pursued its way:
This ponderous Block was caught by me,
And o'er your head, as you may see,
'Tis hanging to this day!

The Thing had better been asleep,
Whatever thing it were,
Or Breeze, or Bird, or Dog, or Sheep,
That first did plant you there.
For you and your green twigs decoy
The little witless Shepherd-boy
To come and slumber in your bower;
And, trust me, on some sultry noon,
Both you and he, Heaven knows how soon!
Will perish in one hour.

From me this friendly warning take' —
The Broom began to doze,
And thus, to keep herself awake,
Did gently interpose:
'My thanks for your discourse are due;
That more than what you say is true,
I know, and I have known it long;
Frail is the bond by which we hold
Our being, whether young or old,
Wise, foolish, weak, or strong.

Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small;
And he is oft the wisest man,
Who is not wise at all.

For me, why should I wish to roam?
This spot is my paternal home,
It is my pleasant heritage;
My Father many a happy year,
Here spread his careless blossoms, here
Attained a good old age.

Even such as his may be my lot.
What cause have I to haunt
My heart with terrors? Am I not
In truth a favoured plant!
On me such bounty Summer pours,
That I am covered o'er with flowers;
And, when the Frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay
That you might look at me and say,
This Plant can never die.

The Butterfly, all green and gold,
To me hath often flown,
Here in my Blossoms to behold
Wings lovely as his own.
When grass is chill with rain or dew,
Beneath my shade, the mother Ewe
Lies with her infant Lamb; I see
The love they to each other make,
And the sweet joy, which they partake,
It is a joy to me.'

Her voice was blithe, her heart was light;
The Broom might have pursued
Her speech, until the stars of night
Their journey had renewed;

But in the branches of the Oak
Two Ravens now began to croak
Their nuptial song, a gladsome air;
And to her own green bower the breeze
That instant brought two stripling Bees
To rest, or murmur there.

One night, my Children! from the North
There came a furious blast;
At break of day I ventured forth,
And near the Cliff I passed.
The storm had fallen upon the Oak,
And struck him with a mighty stroke,
And whirled, and whirled him far away;
And, in one hospitable cleft,
The little careless Broom was left
To live for many a day."

X.

SONG FOR THE SPINNING WHEEL.

FOUNDED UPON A BELIEF PREVALENT AMONG THE PASTORAL
VALES OF WESTMORELAND.

SWIFTLY turn the murmuring wheel!
Night has brought the welcome hour,
When the weary fingers feel
Help, as if from faery power;
Dewy night o'ershades the ground;
Turn the swift wheel round and round!

Now, beneath the starry sky,
Couch the widely-scattered sheep; —
Ply the pleasant labour, ply!
For the spindle, while they sleep,
Runs with speed more smooth and fine,
Gathering up a trustier line.

Short-lived likings may be bred
By a glance from fickle eyes;
But true love is like the thread
Which the kindly wool supplies,
When the flocks are all at rest
Sleeping on the mountain's breast.

XI.

THE REDBREAST AND BUTTERFLY.

ART thou the Bird whom Man loves best,
The pious Bird with the scarlet breast,
Our little English Robin;
The Bird that comes about our doors
When Autumn winds are sobbing?
Art thou the Peter of Norway Boors?
Their Thomas in Finland,
And Russia far inland?
The Bird, who by some name or other
All men who know thee call their Brother,

The Darling of Children and men?
Could Father Adam * open his eyes
And see this sight beneath the skies,
He'd wish to close them again.

If the Butterfly knew but his friend,
Hither his flight he would bend;
And find his way to me,
Under the branches of the tree:
In and out, he darts about;
Can this be the Bird, to man so good,
That, after their bewildering,
Covered with leaves the little children,
So painfully in the wood?

What ailed thee, Robin, that thou could'st pursue
A beautiful Creature,
That is gentle by nature?
Beneath the summer sky
From flower to flower let him fly;
'Tis all that he wishes to do.
The Cheerer Thou of our in-door sadness,
He is the Friend of our summer gladness:
What hinders, then, that ye should be
Playmates in the sunny weather,
And fly about in the air together!
His beautiful bosom is drest,
In crimson as bright as thine own:
If thou would'st be happy in thy nest,
O pious Bird! whom man loves best,
Love him or leave him alone!

* See Paradise Lost, Book XI., where Adam points out to Eve the ominous sign of the Eagle chasing "two Birds of gayest plume," and the gentle Hart and Hind pursued by their enemy.

XII.

THE KITTEN

AND

THE FALLING LEAVES.

THAT way look, my Infant, lo!
What a pretty baby show!
See the Kitten on the Wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,
Withered leaves — one — two — and three —
From the lofty Elder-tree!
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,
Eddying round and round they sink
Softly, slowly: one might think,
From the motions that are made,
Every little leaf conveyed
Sylph or Faery hither tending, —
To this lower world descending,
Each invisible and mute,
In his wavering parachute.
—— But the Kitten, how she starts,
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!
First at one, and then its fellow
Just as light and just as yellow;
There are many now — now one —
Now they stop and there are none:
What intenseness of desire
In her upward eye of fire!
With a tiger-leap half way
Now she meets the coming prey,

Lets it go as fast, and then
Has it in her power again :
Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian Conjuror ;
Quick as he in feats of art,
Far beyond in joy of heart.
Were her antics played in the eye
Of a thousand Standers-by,
Clapping hands with shout and stare,
What would little Tabby care
For the plaudits of the Crowd ?
Over happy to be proud,
Over wealthy in the treasure
Of her own exceeding pleasure !

'Tis a pretty Baby-treat ;
Nor, I deem, for me unmeet ;
Here, for neither Babe nor me,
Other Play-mate can I see.
Of the countless living things,
That with stir of feet and wings
(In the sun or under shade,
Upon bough or grassy blade)
And with busy revellings,
Chirp and song, and murmurings,
Made this Orchard's narrow space,
And this Vale so blithe a place ;
Multitudes are swept away
Never more to breathe the day :
Some are sleeping ; some in Bands
Travelled into distant Lands ;
Others slunk to moor and wood,
Far from human neighbourhood ;
And, among the Kinds that keep
With us closer fellowship,

With us openly abide,
All have laid their mirth aside.
— Where is he that giddy Sprite,
Blue-cap, with his colours bright,
Who was blest as bird could be,
Feeding in the apple-tree;
Made such wanton spoil and rout,
Turning blossoms inside out;
Hung with head towards the ground,
Fluttered, perched, into a round
Bound himself, and then unbound;
Lithest, gaudiest Harlequin!
Prettiest Tumbler ever seen!
Light of heart and light of limb;
What is now become of Him?
Lambs, that through the mountains went
Frisking, bleating merriment,
When the year was in its prime,
They are sobered by this time.
If you look to vale or hill,
If you listen, all is still,
Save a little neighbouring Rill,
That from out the rocky ground
Strikes a solitary sound.
Vainly glitters hill and plain,
And the air is calm in vain;
Vainly Morning spreads the lure
Of a sky serene and pure;
Creature none can she decoy
Into open sign of joy:
Is it that they have a fear
Of the dreary season near?
Or that other pleasures be
Sweeter even than gaiety?

Yet, whate'er enjoyments dwell
In the impenetrable cell
Of the silent heart which Nature
Furnishes to every Creature ;
Whatsoe'er we feel and know
Too sedate for outward show,
Such a light of gladness breaks,
Pretty Kitten ! from thy freaks, —
Spreads with such a living grace
O'er my little Laura's face ;
Yes, the sight so stirs and charms
Thee, Baby, laughing in my arms,
That almost I could repine
That your transports are not mine,
That I do not wholly fare
Even as ye do, thoughtless Pair !
And I will have my careless season
Spite of melancholy reason,
Will walk through life in such a way
That, when time brings on decay,
Now and then I may possess
Hours of perfect gladness.
— Pleased by any random toy ;
By a Kitten's busy joy,
Or an Infant's laughing eye
Sharing in the ecstasy ;
I would fare like that or this,
Find my wisdom in my bliss ;
Keep the sprightly soul awake,
And have faculties to take,
Even from things by sorrow wrought,
Matter for a jocund thought,
Spite of care, and spite of grief,
To gambol with Life's falling Leaf.

XIII.

A FLOWER GARDEN.

TELL me, ye Zephyrs ! that unfold,
While fluttering o'er this gay Recess,
Pinions that fanned the teeming mould
Of Eden's blissful wilderness,
Did only softly-stealing Hours
There close the peaceful lives of flowers ?

Say, when the *moving* Creatures saw
All kinds commingled without fear,
Prevailed a like indulgent law
For the still Growths that prosper here ?
Did wanton Fawn and Kid forbear
The half-blown Rose, the Lily spare ?

Or peeped they often from their beds
And prematurely disappeared,
Devoured like pleasure ere it spreads
A bosom to the Sun endeared ?
If such their harsh untimely doom,
It falls not *here* on bud or bloom.

All Summer long the happy Eve
Of this fair Spot her flowers may bind,
Nor e'er, with ruffled fancy, grieve,
From the next glance she casts, to find
That love for little Things by Fate
Is rendered vain as love for great.

Yet, where the guardian Fence is wound,
So subtly is the eye beguiled
It sees not nor suspects a Bound,
No more than in some forest wild ;
Free as the light in semblance — crost
Only by art in nature lost.

And, though the jealous turf refuse
By random footsteps to be prest,
And feeds on never-sullied dew,
Ye, gentle breezes from the West,
With all the ministers of Hope,
Are tempted to this sunny slope !

And hither throngs of Birds resort ;
Some, inmates lodged in shady nests,
Some, perched on stems of stately port
That nod to welcome transient guests ;
While Hare and Leveret, seen at play,
Appear not more shut out than they.

Apt emblem (for reproof of pride)
This delicate Enclosure shows
Of modest kindness, that would hide
The firm protection she bestows ;
Of manners, like its viewless fence,
Ensuring peace to innocence.

Thus spake the moral Muse — her wing
Abruptly spreading to depart,
She left that farewell offering,
Memento for some docile heart ;
That may respect the good old age
When Fancy was Truth's willing Page ;
And Truth would skim the flowery glade,
Though entering but as Fancy's Shade.

XIV.
TO THE DAISY.

WITH little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Sweet Daisy ! oft I talk to thee,
 For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming Common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace,
 Which Love makes for thee !

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit, and play with similies,
Loose types of Things through all degrees,
 Thoughts of thy raising :
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humour of the game,
 While I am gazing.

A Nun demure, of lowly port ;
Or sprightly Maiden, of Love's Court,
In thy simplicity the sport
 Of all temptations ;
A Queen in crown of rubies drest ;
A Starveling in a scanty vest ;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
 Thy appellations.

A little Cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy,
That thought comes next — and instantly
 The freak is over,

The shape will vanish, and behold
A silver Shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some Faery bold
In fight to cover !

I see thee glittering from afar ; —
And then thou art a pretty Star ;
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee !
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest ; —
May peace come never to his nest,
Who shall reprove thee !

Sweet Flower ! for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent Creature !
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature !

XV.

TO THE SAME FLOWER.

BRIGHT flower, whose home is every where !
A Pilgrim bold in Nature's care,
And oft, the long year through, the heir
Of joy or sorrow,

Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other Flower I see
The forest thorough !

And wherefore ? Man is soon deprest ;
A thoughtless Thing ! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason ;
But Thou would'st teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
And every season.

XVI.

TO A SKY-LARK.

UP with me ! up with me into the clouds !
For thy song, Lark, is strong ;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds !
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind !

I have walked through wildernesses dreary
And to-day my heart is weary ;
Had I now the wings of a Faery,
Up to thee would I fly.
There's madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine ;
Lift me, guide me high and high
To thy banqueting-place in the sky.

Joyous as morning,
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou would'st be loth
To be such a Traveller as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain River
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when Life's day is done.

XVII.

TO A SEXTON.

LET thy wheel-barrow alone —
Wherefore, Sexton, piling still
In thy Bone-house bone on bone?
'Tis already like a hill
In a field of battle made,
Where three thousand skulls are laid;
These died in peace each with the other, —
Father, Sister, Friend, and Brother.

Mark the spot to which I point !
From this platform, eight feet square,
Take not even a finger-joint :
Andrew's whole fire-side is there.
Here, alone, before thine eyes,
Simon's sickly daughter lies,
From weakness now, and pain defended,
Whom he twenty winters tended.

Look but at the gardener's pride —
How he glories, when he sees
Roses, Lilies, side by side,
Violets in families !
By the heart of Man, his tears,
By his hopes and by his fears,
Thou, old Grey-beard ! art the Warden
Of a far superior garden.

Thus then, each to other dear,
Let them all in quiet lie,
Andrew there, and Susan here,
Neighbours in mortality.
And, should I live through sun and rain
Seven widowed years without my Jane,
O Sexton, do not then remove her,
Let one grave hold the Loved and Lover !

XVIII.

Who fancied what a pretty sight
This Rock would be if edged around
With living Snow-drops? circlet bright!
How glorious to this Orchard-ground!
Who loved the little Rock, and set
Upon its head this Coronet?

Was it the humour of a Child?
Or rather of some love-sick Maid,
Whose brows, the day that she was styled
The Shepherd-queen, were thus arrayed?
Of Man mature, or Matron sage?
Or Old-man toying with his age?

I asked — 'twas whispered, The device
To each and all might well belong:
It is the Spirit of Paradise
That prompts such work, a Spirit strong,
That gives to all the self-same bent
Where life is wise and innocent.

XIX.

SONG

FOR THE WANDERING JEW.

THOUGH the torrents from their fountains
Roar down many a craggy steep,
Yet they find among the mountains
Resting-places calm and deep.

Clouds that love through air to hasten,
Ere the storm its fury stills,
Helmet-like themselves will fasten
On the heads of towering hills.

What, if through the frozen centre
Of the Alps the Chamois bound,
Yet he has a home to enter
In some nook of chosen ground.

If on windy days the Raven
Gambol like a dancing skiff,
Not the less she loves her haven
In the bosom of the cliff.

Though the Sea-horse in the Ocean
Own no dear domestic cave,
Yet he slumbers — by the motion
Rocked of many a gentle wave.

The fleet Ostrich, till day closes,
Vagrant over Desert sands,
Brooding on her eggs reposes
When chill night that care demands.

Day and night my toils redouble,
Never nearer to the goal ;
Night and day, I feel the trouble
Of the Wanderer in my soul.

XX.

THE SEVEN SISTERS ;

OR,

THE SOLITUDE OF BINNORIE

SEVEN Daughters had Lord Archibald,
All Children of one Mother :
I could not say in one short day
What love they bore each other.
A Garland of Seven Lilies wrought !
Seven Sisters that together dwell ;
But he, bold Knight as ever fought,
Their Father, took of them no thought,
He loved the Wars so well.
Sing, mournfully, oh ! mournfully,
The Solitude of Binnorie !

Fresh blows the wind, a western wind,
And from the shores of Erin,
Across the wave, a Rover brave
To Binnorie is steering :
Right onward to the Scottish strand
The gallant ship is borne ;
The Warriors leap upon the land,
And hark ! the Leader of the Band
Hath blown his bugle horn.
Sing, mournfully, oh ! mournfully,
The Solitude of Binnorie.

Beside a Grotto of their own,
With boughs above them closing,
The Seven are laid, and in the shade
They lie like Fawns reposing.
But now, upstarting with affright
At noise of man and steed,
Away they fly to left, to right —
Of your fair household, Father Knight,
Methinks you take small heed !
Sing, mournfully, oh ! mournfully,
The Solitude of Binnorie.

Away the seven fair Campbells fly,
And, over Hill and Hollow,
With menace proud, and insult loud,
The youthful Rovers follow.
Cried they, “ Your Father loves to roam :
Enough for him to find
The empty House when he comes home ;
For us your yellow ringlets comb,
For us be fair and kind ! ”
Sing, mournfully, oh ! mournfully,
The Solitude of Binnorie.

Some close behind, some side by side,
Like clouds in stormy weather ;
They run, and cry, “ Nay, let us die,
And let us die together.”
A Lake was near ; the shore was steep ;
There never foot had been ;
They ran, and with a desperate leap
Together plunged into the deep,
Nor ever more were seen.
Sing mournfully, oh ! mournfully,
The Solitude of Binnorie.

The Stream that flows out of the Lake,
 As through the glen it rambles,
 Repeats a moan o'er moss and stone,
 For those seven lovely Campbells.
 Seven little Islands, green and bare,
 Have risen from out the deep :
 The Fishers say, those Sisters fair,
 By Faeries are all buried there,
 And there together sleep.
 Sing, mournfully, oh ! mournfully,
 The Solitude of Binnorie.

 XXI.

A FRAGMENT.

BETWEEN two sister moorland rills
 There is a spot that seems to lie
 Sacred to flowerets of the hills,
 And sacred to the sky.
 And in this smooth and open dell
 There is a tempest-stricken tree ;
 A corner-stone by lightning cut,
 The last stone of a cottage hut ;
 And in this dell you see
 A thing no storm can e'er destroy,
 The Shadow of a Danish Boy.(1)

In clouds above, the Lark is heard,
But drops not here to earth for rest ;
Within this lonesome nook the Bird
Did never build her nest.
No Beast, no Bird hath here his home ;
Bees, wafted on the breezy air,
Pass high above those fragrant bells
To other flowers ; — to other dells
Their burthens do they bear ;
The Danish Boy walks here alone :
The lovely dell is all his own.

A Spirit of noon-day is he ;
He seems a form of flesh and blood ;
Nor piping Shepherd shall he be,
Nor Herd-boy of the wood.
A regal vest of fur he wears,
In colour like a raven's wing ;
It fears not rain, nor wind, nor dew ;
But in the storm 'tis fresh and blue
As budding pines in Spring ;
His helmet has a vernal grace,
Fresh as the bloom upon his face.

A harp is from his shoulder slung ;
He rests the harp upon his knee ;
And there, in a forgotten tongue,
He warbles melody.
Of flocks upon the neighbouring hill
He is the darling and the joy ;
And often, when no cause appears,
The mountain ponies prick their ears,
— They hear the Danish Boy,
While in the dell he sits alone
Beside the tree and corner-stone.

There sits he : in his face you spy
No trace of a ferocious air,
Nor ever was a cloudless sky
So steady or so fair.
The lovely Danish Boy is blest
And happy in his flowery cove :
From bloody deeds his thoughts are far ;
And yet he warbles songs of war,
That seem like songs of love,
For calm and gentle is his mien ;
Like a dead Boy he is serene.

XXII.

THE PILGRIM'S DREAM ;

OR, THE STAR AND THE GLOW-WORM.

A PILGRIM, when the summer day
Had closed upon his weary way,
A lodging begged beneath a castle's roof ;
But him the haughty Warder spurned ;
And from the gate the Pilgrim turned,
To seek such covert as the field
Or heath-besprinkled copse might yield,
Or lofty wood, shower-proof.

He paced along ; and, pensively,
Halting beneath a shady tree,
Whose moss-grown root might serve for couch or seat,
Fixed on a Star his upward eye ;
Then, from the tenant of the sky
He turned, and watched with kindred look,
A Glow-worm, in a dusky nook,
Apparent at his feet.

The murmur of a neighbouring stream
Induced a soft and slumbrous dream,
A pregnant dream, within whose shadowy bounds
He recognised the earth-born Star,
And *That* which glittered from afar ;
And (strange to witness !) from the frame
Of the ethereal Orb, there came
Intelligible sounds.

Much did it taunt the humbler Light
That now, when day was fled, and night
Hushed the dark earth — fast closing weary eyes,
A very Reptile could presume
To show her taper in the gloom,
As if in rivalry with One
Who sate a Ruler on his throne
Erected in the skies.

“ Exalted Star !” the Worm replied,
“ Abate this unbecoming pride,
Or with a less uneasy lustre shine ;
Thou shrink’st as momentarily thy rays
Are mastered by the breathing haze ;
While neither mist, nor thickest cloud
That shapes in Heaven its murky shroud,
Hath power to injure mine.

But not for this do I aspire
To match the spark of local fire,
That at my will burns on the dewy lawn,
With thy acknowledged glories ; — No !
Yet, thus upbraided, I may show
What favours do attend me here,
Till, like thyself, I disappear
Before the purple dawn.”

When this in modest guise was said,
Across the welkin seemed to spread
A boding sound — for aught but sleep unfit !
Hills quaked — the rivers backward ran —
That Star, so proud of late, looked wan ;
And reeled with visionary stir
In the blue depth, like Lucifer
Cast headlong to the pit !

Fire raged, — and, when the spangled floor
Of ancient ether was no more,
New heavens succeeded, by the dream brought forth :
And all the happy Souls that rode
Transfigured through that fresh abode,
Had heretofore, in humble trust,
Shone meekly mid their native dust,
The Glow-worms of the earth !

This knowledge, from an Angel's voice
Proceeding, made the heart rejoice
Of Him who slept upon the open lea :
Waking at morn he murmured not ;
And, till life's journey closed, the spot
Was to the Pilgrim's soul endeared,
Where by that dream he had been cheered
Beneath the shady tree.

XXIII.

HINT FROM THE MOUNTAINS

FOR CERTAIN POLITICAL PRETENDERS.

“WHO but hails the sight with pleasure
 When the wings of genius rise,
 Their ability to measure
 With great enterprise;
 But in man was ne’er such daring
 As yon Hawk exhibits, pairing
 His brave spirit with the war in
 The stormy skies!

Mark him, how his power he uses,
 Lays it by, at will resumes!
 Mark, ere for his haunt he chooses
 Clouds and utter glooms!
 There, he wheels in downward mazes;
 Sunward now his flight he raises,
 Catches fire, as seems, and blazes
 With uninjured plumes!”—

ANSWER.

“Stranger, ’tis no act of courage
 Which aloft thou dost discern;
 No bold *bird* gone forth to forage
 Mid the tempest stern;
 But such mockery as the Nations
 See, when public perturbations
 Lift men from their native stations,
 Like yon TUFT OF FERN;

Such it is;—the aspiring Creature
 Soaring on undaunted wing,
 (So you fancied) is by nature
 A dull helpless Thing,
 Dry and withered, light and yellow;—
That to be the tempest's fellow!
 Wait—and you shall see how hollow
 Its endeavouring!”

XXIV.

STRAY PLEASURES.

“— *Pleasure is spread through the earth
 In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find.*”

By their floating Mill,
 That lies dead and still,
 Behold yon Prisoners three,
 The Miller with two Dames, on the breast of the Thames!
 The Platform is small, but gives room for them all;
 And they're dancing merrily.

From the shore come the notes
 To their Mill where it floats,
 To their House and their Mill tethered fast;
 To the small wooden Isle where, their work to beguile,
 They from morning to even take whatever is given;—
 And many a blithe day they have past.

In sight of the Spires,
All alive with the fires
Of the Sun going down to his rest,
In the broad open eye of the solitary sky,
They dance,—there are three, as jocund as free,
While they dance on the calm river's breast.

Man and Maidens wheel,
They themselves make the Reel,
And their Music's a prey which they seize;
It plays not for them,—what matter? 'tis theirs;
And if they had care, it has scattered their cares,
While they dance, crying, "Long as ye please!"

They dance not for me,
Yet mine is their glee!
Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find;
Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly kind,
Moves all nature to gladness and mirth.

The Showers of the Spring
Rouse the Birds, and they sing;
If the Wind do but stir for his proper delight,
Each Leaf, that and this, his neighbour will kiss;
Each Wave, one and t'other, speeds after his brother;
They are happy, for that is their right!

XXV.

ON SEEING A
NEEDLECASE IN THE FORM OF A HARP,
THE WORK OF E. M. S.

Frowns are on every Muse's face,
Reproaches from their lips are sent,
That mimickry should thus disgrace
The noble Instrument.

A very Harp in all but size!
Needles for strings in apt gradation!
Minerva's self would stigmatize
The unclassic profanation.

Even her *own* Needle that subdued
Arachne's rival spirit,
Though wrought in Vulcan's happiest mood,
Like station could not merit.

And this, too, from the Laureate's Child,
A living Lord of melody!
How will her Sire be reconciled
To the refined indignity?

I spake, when whispered a low voice,
"Bard! moderate your ire;
"Spirits of all degrees rejoice
"In presence of the Lyre.

“ The Minstrels of Pygmean bands,
“ Dwarf Genii, moonlight-loving Fays,
“ Have shells to fit their tiny hands
“ And suit their slender lays.

“ Some, still more delicate of ear,
“ Have lutes (believe my words)
“ Whose framework is of gossamer,
“ While sunbeams are the chords.

“ Gay Sylphs this Minature will court,
“ Made vocal by their brushing wings,
“ And sullen Gnomes will learn to sport
“ Around its polished strings;

“ Whence strains to love-sick Maiden dear,
“ While in her lonely Bower she tries
“ To cheat the thought she cannot cheer,
“ By fanciful embroideries.

“ Trust, angry Bard ! a knowing Sprite,
“ Nor think the Harp her lot deploras ;
“ Though mid the stars the Lyre shine bright,
“ Love *stoops* as fondly as he soars.”

XXVI.

ADDRESS TO MY INFANT DAUGHTER,

ON BEING REMINDED, THAT SHE WAS A MONTH OLD,
ON THAT DAY.

————— HAST thou then survived,
Mild Offspring of infirm humanity,
Meek Infant! among all forlornest things
The most forlorn, one life of that bright Star,
The second glory of the heavens? — Thou hast;
Already hast survived that great decay,
That transformation through the wide earth felt,
And by all nations. In that Being's sight
From whom the Race of human kind proceed,
A thousand years are but as yesterday;
And one day's narrow circuit is to him
Not less capacious than a thousand years.
But what is time? What outward glory? neither
A measure is of Thee, whose claims extend
Through "heaven's eternal year." — Yet hail to Thee,
Frail, feeble Monthling! — by that name, methinks,
Thy scanty breathing time is portioned out
Not idly. — Hadst thou been of Indian birth,
Couched on a casual bed of moss and leaves,
And rudely canopied by leafy boughs,
Or to the churlish elements exposed
On the blank plains, — the coldness of the night,
Or the night's darkness, or its cheerful face
Of beauty, by the changing Moon adorned,
Would, with imperious admonition, then
Have scored thine age, and punctually timed
Thine infant history, on the minds of those
Who might have wandered with thee. — Mother's love,

Nor less than Mother's love in other breasts,
Will, among us warm clad and warmly housed,
Do for thee what the finger of the heavens
Doth all too often harshly execute
For thy unblest Coevals, amid wilds
Where Fancy hath small liberty to grace
The affections, to exalt them or refine;
And the maternal sympathy itself,
Though strong, is, in the main, a joyless tie
Of naked instinct, wound about the heart.
Happier, far happier is thy lot and ours!
Even now — to solemnise thy helpless state,
And to enliven in the mind's regard
Thy passive beauty — parallels have risen,
Resemblances, or contrasts, that connect,
Within the region of a Father's thoughts,
Thee and thy Mate and Sister of the sky.
And first; — thy sinless progress, through a world
By sorrow darkened and by care disturbed,
Apt likeness bears to hers, through gathered clouds,
Moving untouched in silver purity,
And cheering oft-times their reluctant gloom.
Fair are ye both, and both are free from stain:
But thou, how leisurely thou fillest thy horn
With brightness! — leaving her to post along,
And range about — disquieted in change,
And still impatient of the shape she wears.
Once up, once down the hill, one journey, Babe,
That will suffice thee; and it seems that now
Thou hast fore-knowledge that such task is thine;
Thou travellest so contentedly, and sleepest
In such a heedless peace. Alas! full soon
Hath this conception, grateful to behold,
Changed countenance, like an object sullied o'er

By breathing mist ; and thine appears to be
A mournful labour, while to her is given
Hope, and a renovation without end.
— That smile forbids the thought ; — for on thy face
Smiles are beginning, like the beams of dawn,
To shoot and circulate ; — smiles have there been seen, —
Tranquil assurances that Heaven supports
The feeble motions of thy life, and cheers
Thy loneliness ; — or shall those smiles be called
Feelers of love, — put forth as if to explore
This untried world, and to prepare thy way
Through a strait passage intricate and dim ?
Such are they, — and the same are tokens, signs,
Which, when the appointed season hath arrived,
Joy, as her holiest language, shall adopt ;
And Reason's godlike Power be proud to own.

POEMS

ON THE NAMING OF PLACES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

By persons resident in the country and attached to rural objects, many places will be found unnamed or of unknown names, where little Incidents must have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar interest. From a wish to give some sort of record to such Incidents, or renew the gratification of such Feelings, Names have been given to Places by the Author and some of his Friends, and the following Poems written in consequence.

P O E M S
ON
THE NAMING OF PLACES.

I.

It was an April morning: fresh and clear
The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed; and yet the voice
Of waters which the winter had supplied
Was softened down into a vernal tone,
The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
And hopes and wishes, from all living things
Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
The budding groves appeared as if in haste
To spur the steps of June; as if their shades
Of *various* green were hinderances that stood
Between them and their object: yet, meanwhile,
There was such deep contentment in the air,
That every naked ash, and tardy tree
Yet leafless, seemed as though the countenance
With which it looked on this delightful day
Were native to the summer. — Up the brook
I roamed in the confusion of my heart,
Alive to all things and forgetting all.
At length I to a sudden turning came
In this continuous glen, where down a rock
The Stream, so ardent in its course before,
Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that all
Which I till then had heard, appeared the voice

Of common pleasure : beast and bird, the Lamb,
The Shepherd's Dog, the Linnet and the Thrush
Vied with this Waterfall, and made a song
Which, while I listened, seemed like the wild growth
Or like some natural produce of the air,
That could not cease to be. Green leaves were here;
But 'twas the foliage of the rocks, the birch,
The yew, the holly, and the bright green thorn,
With hanging islands of resplendent furze:
And on a summit, distant a short space,
By any who should look beyond the dell,
A single mountain Cottage might be seen.
I gazed and gazed, and to myself I said,
"Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook,
My EMMA, I will dedicate to thee."
—— Soon did the spot become my other home,
My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,
To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,
Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of EMMA'S DELL.

II.

TO JOANNA.

AMID the smoke of cities did you pass
The time of early youth; and there you learned,
From years of quiet industry, to love
The living Beings by your own fire-side,
With such a strong devotion, that your heart

Is slow toward the sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendships with the streams and groves.
Yet we, who are transgressors in this kind,
Dwelling retired in our simplicity
Among the woods and fields, we love you well,
Joanna! and I guess, since you have been
So distant from us now for two long years,
That you will gladly listen to discourse,
However trivial, if you thence are taught
That they, with whom you once were happy, talk
Familiarly of you and of old times.

While I was seated, now some ten days past,
Beneath those lofty firs, that overtop
Their ancient neighbour, the old Steeple tower,
The Vicar from his gloomy house hard by
Came forth to greet me; and when he had asked,
“How fares Joanna, that wild-hearted Maid!
And when will she return to us?” he paused;
And, after short exchange of village news,
He with grave looks demanded, for what cause,
Reviving obsolete Idolatry,
I, like a Runic Priest, in characters
Of formidable size had chiselled out
Some uncouth name upon the native rock,
Above the Rotha, by the forest side.
— Now, by those dear immunities of heart
Engendered betwixt malice and true love,
I was not loth to be so catechised,
And this was my reply: — “As it befel,
One summer morning we had walked abroad
At break of day, Joanna and myself.
— ’Twas that delightful season when the broom,

Full-flowered, and visible on every steep,
Along the copses runs in veins of gold.
Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks;
And when we came in front of that tall rock
Which looks toward the East, I there stopped short,
And traced the lofty barrier with my eye
From base to summit; such delight I found
To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower,
That intermixture of delicious hues,
Along so vast a surface, all at once,
In one impression, by connecting force
Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart.
— When I had gazed perhaps two minutes' space,
Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
That ravishment of mine, and laughed aloud.
The Rock, like something starting from a sleep,
Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed again;
That ancient Woman seated on Helm-Crag
Was ready with her cavern; Hammar-Scar,
And the tall Steep of Silver-How, sent forth
A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone:
Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
Carried the Lady's voice, — old Skiddaw blew
His speaking trumpet; — back out of the clouds
Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head.
— Now whether (said I to our cordial friend,
Who in the hey-day of astonishment
Smiled in my face) this were in simple truth
A work accomplished by the brotherhood
Of ancient mountains, or my ear was touched
With dreams and visionary impulses
To me alone imparted, sure I am

That there was a loud uproar in the hills:
 And, while we both were listening, to my side
 The fair Joanna drew, as if she wished
 To shelter from some object of her fear.
 —And hence, long afterwards, when eighteen moons
 Were wasted, as I chanced to walk alone
 Beneath this rock, at sunrise, on a calm
 And silent morning, I sat down, and there,
 In memory of affections old and true,
 I chiselled out in those rude characters
 Joanna's name upon the living stone.
 And I, and all who dwell by my fire-side,
 Have called the lovely rock, JOANNA'S ROCK."

Note. — In Cumberland and Westmorland are several Inscriptions, upon the native rock, which, from the wasting of Time, and the rudeness of the Workmanship, have been mistaken for Runic. They are without doubt Roman.

The Rotha, mentioned in this poem, is the River which, flowing through the lakes of Grasmere and Rydale, falls into Wynander. On Helm-Crag, that impressive single Mountain at the head of the Vale of Grasmere, is a rock which from most points of view bears a striking resemblance to an Old Woman cowering. Close by this rock is one of those Fissures or Caverns, which in the language of the country are called Dungeons. Most of the Mountains here mentioned immediately surround the Vale of Grasmere; of the others, some are at a considerable distance, but they belong to the same cluster.

III.

THERE is an Eminence, — of these our hills
 The last that parleys with the setting sun.
 We can behold it from our Orchard-seat;
 And, when at evening we pursue our walk
 Along the public way, this Cliff, so high

Above us, and so distant in its height,
Is visible; and often seems to send
Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
The meteors make of it a favourite haunt:
The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
In the mid heavens, is never half so fair
As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
The loneliest place we have among the clouds.
And She who dwells with me, whom I have loved
With such communion, that no place on earth
Can ever be a solitude to me,
Hath to this lonely Summit given my Name.

IV.

A NARROW girdle of rough stones and crags,
A rude and natural causeway, interposed
Between the water and a winding slope
Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore
Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy:
And there, myself and two beloved Friends,
One calm September morning, ere the mist
Had altogether yielded to the sun,
Sauntered on this retired and difficult way.
—— Ill suits the road with one in haste, but we
Played with our time; and, as we strolled along,
It was our occupation to observe
Such objects as the waves had tossed ashore,
Feather, or leaf, or weed, or withered bough,
Each on the other heaped, along the line
Of the dry wreck. And, in our vacant mood,
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft

Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,
Suddenly halting now — a lifeless stand!
And starting off again with freak as sudden;
In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
Its playmate, rather say its moving soul.
—— And often, trifling with a privilege
Alike indulged to all, we paused, one now,
And now the other, to point out, perchance
To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
Either to be divided from the place
On which it grew, or to be left alone
To its own beauty. Many such there are,
Fair Ferns and Flowers, and chiefly that tall Fern,
So stately, of the Queen Osmunda named;
Plant lovelier, in its own retired abode
On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the side
Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere,
Sole-sitting by the shores of old Romance.
— So fared we that bright morning: from the fields,
Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
Of Reapers, Men and Women, Boys and Girls.
Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
And feeding thus our fancies, we advanced
Along the indented shore; when suddenly,
Through a thin veil of glittering haze was seen
Before us, on a point of jutting land,
The tall and upright figure of a Man
Attired in peasant's garb, who stood alone,
Angling beside the margin of the lake.
Improvident and reckless, we exclaimed,
The Man must be, who thus can lose a day

Of the mid harvest, when the labourer's hire
Is ample, and some little might be stored
Wherewith to cheer him in the winter time.
Thus talking of that Peasant, we approached
Close to the spot where with his rod and line
He stood alone; whereat he turned his head
To greet us — and we saw a Man worn down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
That for my single self I looked at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustained. —
Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
The Man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants. I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was changed
To serious musing and to self-reproach.
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserved in speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.
— Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My Friend, Myself, and She who then received
The same admonishment, have called the place
By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
As e'er by Mariner was given to Bay
Or Foreland, on a new-discovered coast;
And POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the Name it bears.

V.

TO M. H.

OUR walk was far among the ancient trees;
There was no road, nor any woodman's path;
But the thick umbrage, checking the wild growth
Of weed and sapling, along soft green turf
Beneath the branches, of itself had made
A track, that brought us to a slip of lawn,
And a small bed of water in the woods.
All round this pool both flocks and herds might drink
On its firm margin, even as from a Well,
Or some Stone-basin which the Herdsman's hand
Had shaped for their refreshment; nor did sun,
Or wind from any quarter, ever come,
But as a blessing, to this calm recess,
This glade of water and this one green field.
The spot was made by Nature for herself;
The travellers know it not, and 'twill remain
Unknown to them: but it is beautiful;
And if a man should plant his cottage near,
Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,
And blend its waters with his daily meal,
He would so love it, that in his death hour
Its image would survive among his thoughts:
And therefore, my sweet MARY, this still Nook,
With all its beeches, we have named from You.

VI.

WHEN, to the attractions of the busy World,
Preferring studious leisure, I had chosen
A habitation in this peaceful Vale,
Sharp season followed of continual storm
In deepest winter; and, from week to week,
Pathway, and lane, and public road, were clogged
With frequent showers of snow. Upon a hill
At a short distance from my Cottage, stands
A stately Fir-grove, whither I was wont
To hasten, for I found, beneath the roof
Of that perennial shade, a cloistral place
Of refuge, with an unincumbered floor.
Here, in safe covert, on the shallow snow,
And, sometimes, on a speck of visible earth,
The redbreast near me hopped; nor was I loth
To sympathise with vulgar coppice Birds
That, for protection from the nipping blast,
Hither repaired. — A single beech-tree grew
Within this grove of firs; and, on the fork
Of that one beech, appeared a thrush's nest;
A last year's nest, conspicuously built
At such small elevation from the ground
As gave sure sign that they, who in that house
Of nature and of love had made their home
Amid the fir-trees, all the summer long
Dwelt in a tranquil spot. And oftentimes,
A few sheep, stragglers from some mountain-flock,
Would watch my motions with suspicious stare,
From the remotest outskirts of the grove, —
Some nook where they had made their final stand,

Huddling together from two fears — the fear
Of me and of the storm. Full many an hour
Here did I lose. But in this grove the trees
Had been so thickly planted, and had thriven
In such perplexed and intricate array,
That vainly did I seek, between their stems,
A length of open space, where to and fro
My feet might move without concern or care ;
And, baffled thus, before the storm relaxed,
I ceased the shelter to frequent, — and prized,
Less than I wished to prize, that calm recess.

The snows dissolved, and genial Spring returned
To clothe the fields with verdure. Other haunts
Meanwhile were mine; till, one bright April day,
By chance retiring from the glare of noon
To this forsaken covert, there I found
A hoary path-way traced between the trees,
And winding on with such an easy line
Along a natural opening, that I stood
Much wondering how I could have sought in vain
For what was now so obvious. To abide,
For an allotted interval of ease,
Beneath my cottage roof, had newly come
From the wild sea a cherished Visitant ;
And with the sight of this same path — begun,
Begun and ended, in the shady grove,
Pleasant conviction flashed upon my mind
That, to this opportune recess allured,
He had surveyed it with a finer eye,
A heart more wakeful; and had worn the track
By pacing here, unwearied and alone,
In that habitual restlessness of foot
With which the Sailor measures o'er and o'er

His short domain upon the vessel's deck,
While she is travelling through the dreary sea.

When thou hadst quitted Esthwaite's pleasant shore,
And taken thy first leave of those green hills
And rocks that were the play-ground of thy Youth,
Year followed year, my Brother! and we two,
Conversing not, knew little in what mould
Each other's minds were fashioned; and at length,
When once again we met in Grasmere Vale,
Between us there was little other bond
Than common feelings of fraternal love.
But thou, a School-boy, to the sea hadst carried
Undying recollections; Nature there
Was with thee; she, who loved us both, she still
Was with thee; and even so didst thou become
A *silent* Poet; from the solitude
Of the vast sea didst bring a watchful heart
Still couchant, an inevitable ear,
And an eye practised like a blind man's touch.
— Back to the joyless Ocean thou art gone;
Nor from this vestige of thy musing hours
Could I withhold thy honoured name, and now
I love the fir-grove with a perfect love.
Thither do I withdraw when cloudless suns
Shine hot, or wind blows troublesome and strong:
And there I sit at evening, when the steep
Of Silver-how, and Grasmere's peaceful Lake,
And one green Island, gleam between the stems
Of the dark firs, a visionary scene!
And, while I gaze upon the spectacle
Of clouded splendour, on this dream-like sight
Of solemn loveliness, I think on thee,
My Brother, and on all which thou hast lost.

Nor seldom, if I rightly guess, while Thou,
Muttering the Verses which I muttered first
Among the mountains, through the midnight watch
Art pacing thoughtfully the Vessel's deck
In some far region, here, while o'er my head,
At every impulse of the moving breeze,
The fir-grove murmurs with a sea-like sound,
Alone I tread this path; — for aught I know,
Timing my steps to thine; and, with a store
Of undistinguishable sympathies,
Mingling most earnest wishes for the day
When we, and others whom we love, shall meet
A second time, in Grasmere's happy Vale.

Note. — This wish was not granted; the lamented Person not long after perished by shipwreck, in discharge of his duty as Commander of the Honourable East India Company's Vessel, the Earl of Abergavenny.

INSCRIPTIONS.

I.

IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEORTON, THE SEAT OF SIR GEORGE
BEAUMONT, BART. LEICESTERSHIRE.

THE embowering Rose, the Acacia, and the Pine,
Will not unwillingly their place resign;
If but the Cedar thrive that near them stands,
Planted by Beaumont's and by Wordsworth's hands.
One wooed the silent Art with studious pains, —
These Groves have heard the Other's pensive strains;
Devoted thus, their spirits did unite
By interchange of knowledge and delight.
May Nature's kindest powers sustain the Tree,
And Love protect it from all injury!
And when its potent branches, wide out-thrown,
Darken the brow of this memorial Stone,
Here may some Painter sit in future days,
Some future Poet meditate his lays;
Not mindless of that distant age renowned
When Inspiration hovered o'er this ground,
The haunt of him who sang how spear and shield
In civil conflict met on Bosworth Field;
And of that famous Youth, full soon removed
From earth, perhaps by Shakspeare's self-approved,
Fletcher's Associate, Jonson's Friend beloved.

II.

IN A GARDEN OF THE SAME.

OFt is the Medal faithful to its trust
When Temples, Columns, Towers, are laid in dust ;
And 'tis a common ordinance of fate
That things obscure and small outlive the great :
Hence, when yon Mansion and the flowery trim
Of this fair Garden, and its alleys dim,
And all its stately trees, are passed away,
This little Niche, unconscious of decay,
Perchance may still survive. — And be it known
That it was scooped within the living stone, —
Not by the sluggish and ungrateful pains
Of labourer plodding for his daily gains,
But by an industry that wrought in love ;
With help from female hands, that proudly strove
To aid the work, what time these walks and bowers
Were shaped to cheer dark winter's lonely hours.

III.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART.,
AND IN HIS NAME, FOR AN URN, PLACED BY HIM AT THE
TERMINATION OF A NEWLY-PLANTED AVENUE, IN THE SAME
GROUNDS.

YE Lime-trees, ranged before this hallowed Urn,
Shoot forth with lively power at Spring's return ;
And be not slow a stately growth to rear
Of Pillars, branching off from year to year,
Till they have learned to frame a darksome Aisle ; —
That may recal to mind that awful Pile

Where Reynolds, 'mid our Country's noblest Dead,
 In the last sanctity of fame is laid.
 — There, though by right the excelling Painter sleep
 Where Death and Glory a joint sabbath keep,
 Yet not the less his Spirit would hold dear
 Self-hidden praise, and Friendship's private tear:
 Hence, on my patrimonial Grounds, have I
 Raised this frail tribute to his memory;
 From youth a zealous follower of the Art
 That he professed, attached to him in heart;
 Admiring, loving, and with grief and pride
 Feeling what England lost when Reynolds died.

 IV.

FOR A SEAT IN THE GROVES OF COLEORTON.

BENEATH yon eastern Ridge, the craggy Bound,
 Rugged and high, of Charnwood's forest ground,
 Stand yet, but, Stranger! hidden from thy view,
 The ivied Ruins of forlorn GRACE DIEU;
 Erst a religious House, which day and night
 With hymns resounded, and the chanted rite:
 And when those rites had ceased, the Spot gave birth
 To honourable Men of various worth:
 There, on the margin of a Streamlet wild,
 Did Francis Beaumont sport, an eager Child;
 There, under shadow of the neighbouring rocks,
 Sang youthful tales of shepherds and their flocks;
 Unconscious prelude to heroic themes,
 Heart-breaking tears, and melancholy dreams

Of slighted love, and scorn, and jealous rage,
With which his genius shook the buskined Stage.
Communities are lost, and Empires die,
And things of holy use unhallowed lie;
They perish;—but the Intellect can raise,
From airy words alone, a Pile that ne'er decays.

V.

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL UPON A STONE IN THE WALL OF THE
HOUSE (AN OUT-HOUSE) ON THE ISLAND AT GRASMERE.

RUDE is this Edifice, and Thou hast seen
Buildings, albeit rude, that have maintained
Proportions more harmonious, and approached
To somewhat of a closer fellowship
With the ideal grace. Yet, as it is,
Do take it in good part:—alas! the poor
Vitruvius of our village had no help
From the great City; never, on the leaves
Of red Morocco folio saw displayed
The skeletons and pre-existing ghosts
Of Beauties yet unborn, the rustic Box,
Snug Cot, with Coach-house, Shed, and Hermitage.
Thou see'st a homely Pile, yet to these walls
The heifer comes in the snow-storm, and here
The new-dropped lamb finds shelter from the wind.
And hither does one Poet sometimes row
His Pinnace, a small vagrant Barge, up-piled
With plenteous store of heath and withered fern,
(A lading which he with his sickle cuts,
Among the mountains) and beneath this roof

He makes his summer couch, and here at noon
Spreads out his limbs, while, yet unshorn, the Sheep,
Panting beneath the burthen of their wool,
Lie round him, even as if they were a part
Of his own Household: nor, while from his bed
He through that door-place looks toward the lake
And to the stirring breezes, does he want
Creations lovely as the work of sleep,
Fair sights — and visions of romantic joy!

VI.

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL ON A STONE, ON THE SIDE OF
THE MOUNTAIN OF BLACK COMB.

STAY, bold Adventurer; rest awhile thy limbs
On this commodious Seat! for much remains
Of hard ascent before thou reach the top
Of this huge Eminence, — from blackness named,
And, to far-travelled storms of sea and land,
A favourite spot of tournament and war!
But thee may no such boisterous visitants
Molest; may gentle breezes fan thy brow;
And neither cloud conceal, nor misty air
Bedim, the grand terraqueous spectacle,
From centre to circumference, unveiled!
Know, if thou grudge not to prolong thy rest,
That on the summit whither thou art bound,
A geographic Labourer pitched his tent,
With books supplied and instruments of art,
To measure height and distance; lonely task,
Week after week pursued! — To him was given

Full many a glimpse (but sparingly bestowed
On timid man) of Nature's processes
Upon the exalted hills. He made report
That once, while there he plied his studious work
Within that canvass Dwelling, suddenly
The many-coloured map before his eyes
Became invisible: for all around
Had darkness fallen — unthreatened, unproclaimed —
As if the golden day itself had been
Extinguished in a moment; total gloom,
In which he sate alone, with unclosed eyes,
Upon the blinded mountain's silent top!

See Vol. II. p. 11.

VII.

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL UPON A STONE, THE LARGEST
OF A HEAP LYING NEAR A DESERTED QUARRY, UPON ONE OF
THE ISLANDS AT RYDAL.

STRANGER! this hillock of mis-shapen stones
Is not a Ruin of the ancient time,
Nor, as perchance thou rashly deem'st, the Cairn
Of some old British Chief: 'tis nothing more
Than the rude embryo of a little Dome
Or Pleasure-house, once destined to be built
Among the birch-trees of this rocky isle.
But, as it chanced, Sir William having learned
That from the shore a full-grown man might wade,
And make himself a freeman of this spot

At any hour he chose, the Knight forthwith
Desisted, and the quarry and the mound
Are monuments of his unfinished task. —
The block on which these lines are traced, perhaps,
Was once selected as the corner-stone
Of the intended Pile, which would have been
Some quaint odd plaything of elaborate skill,
So that, I guess, the linnet and the thrush,
And other little builders who dwell here,
Had wondered at the work. But blame him not,
For old Sir William was a gentle Knight,
Bred in this vale, to which he appertained
With all his ancestry. Then peace to him,
And for the outrage which he had devised
Entire forgiveness! — But if thou art one
On fire with thy impatience to become
An inmate of these mountains, — if, disturbed
By beautiful conceptions, thou hast hewn
Out of the quiet rock the elements
Of thy trim Mansion destined soon to blaze
In snow-white splendour, — think again, and, taught
By old Sir William and his quarry, leave
Thy fragments to the bramble and the rose;
There let the vernal Slow-worm sun himself,
And let the Redbreast hop from stone to stone.

VIII.

INSCRIPTIONS SUPPOSED TO BE FOUND IN AND NEAR
A HERMIT'S CELL.

1.

HOPES what are they? — Beads of morning
Strung on slender blades of grass;
Or a spider's web adorning
In a strait and treacherous pass.

What are fears but voices airy?
Whispering harm where harm is not;
And deluding the unwary
Till the fatal bolt is shot!

What is glory? — in the socket
See how dying tapers fare!
What is pride? — a whizzing rocket
That would emulate a star.

What is friendship? — do not trust her,
Nor the vows which she has made;
Diamonds dart their brightest lustre
From a palsy-shaken head.

What is truth? — a staff rejected;
Duty? — an unwelcome clog;
Joy? — a moon by fits reflected
In a swamp or watery bog;

Bright, as if through ether steering,
To the Traveller's eye it shone:
He hath hailed it re-appearing —
And as quickly it is gone;

Gone, as if for ever hidden,
Or mis-shapen to the sight,
And by sullen weeds forbidden
To resume its native light.

What is youth? — a dancing billow,
(Winds behind, and rocks before!)
Age? — a drooping, tottering willow
On a flat and lazy shore.

What is peace? — when pain is over,
And love ceases to rebel,
Let the last faint sigh discover
That precedes the passing knell!

IX.

INSCRIBED UPON A ROCK.

2.

PAUSE, Traveller! whosoe'er thou be
Whom chance may lead to this retreat,
Where silence yields reluctantly
Even to the fleecy straggler's bleat;

Give voice to what my hand shall trace,
And fear not lest an idle sound
Of words unsuited to the place
Disturb its solitude profound.

I saw this Rock, while vernal air
Blew softly o'er the russet heath,
Uphold a Monument as fair
As Church or Abbey furnisheth.

Unsullied did it meet the day,
Like marble white, like ether pure;
As if, beneath, some hero lay,
Honoured with costliest sepulture.

My fancy kindled as I gazed;
And, ever as the sun shone forth,
The flattered structure glistened, blazed,
And seemed the proudest thing on earth.

But Frost had reared the gorgeous Pile
Unsound as those which fortune builds;
To undermine with secret guile,
Sapped by the very beam that gilds.

And, while I gazed, with sudden shock
Fell the whole Fabric to the ground;
And naked left this dripping Rock,
With shapeless ruin spread around!

X.

3.

HAST thou seen, with flash incessant,
Bubbles gliding under ice,
Bodied forth and evanescent,
No one knows by what device?

Such are thoughts! — A wind-swept meadow
Mimicking a troubled sea,
Such is life; and death a shadow
From the rock eternity!

XI.

NEAR THE SPRING OF THE HERMITAGE.

4.

TROUBLED long with warring notions
Long impatient of thy rod,
I resign my soul's emotions
Unto Thee, mysterious God!

What avails the kindly shelter
Yielded by this craggy rent,
If my spirit toss and welter
On the waves of discontent?

Parching Summer hath no warrant
To consume this crystal Well;
Rains, that make each hill a torrent,
Neither sully it nor swell.

Thus, dishonouring not her station,
Would my Life present to Thee,
Gracious God, the pure oblation
Of divine Tranquillity!

XII.

5.

Not seldom, clad in radiant vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the Morn;
Not seldom Evening in the west
Sinks smilingly forsworn.

The smoothest seas will sometimes prove,
To the confiding Bark, untrue;
And, if she trust the stars above,
They can be treacherous too.

The umbrageous Oak, in pomp outspread,
Full oft, when storms the welkin rend,
Draws lightning down upon the head
It promised to defend.

But Thou art true, incarnate Lord,
Who didst vouchsafe for man to die;
Thy smile is sure, thy plighted word
No change can falsify!

I bent before thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace on suppliant knee;
And peace was given, — nor peace alone,
But faith sublimed to ecstasy!

XIII.

FOR THE SPOT WHERE THE HERMITAGE STOOD ON ST. HERBERT'S
ISLAND, DERWENT-WATER.

IF thou in the dear love of some one Friend
Hast been so happy that thou knowest what thoughts
Will sometimes in the happiness of love
Make the heart sink, then wilt thou reverence
This quiet spot; and, Stranger! not unmoved
Wilt thou behold this shapeless heap of stones,
The desolate ruins of St. Herbert's Cell.
Here stood his threshold; here was spread the roof
That sheltered him, a self-secluded Man,
After long exercise in social cares
And offices humane, intent to adore
The Deity, with undistracted mind,
And meditate on everlasting things,
In utter solitude. — But he had left
A Fellow-labourer, whom the good Man loved
As his own soul. And, when with eye upraised
To heaven he knelt before the crucifix,
While o'er the Lake the cataract of Lodore
Pealed to his orisons, and when he paced
Along the beach of this small isle and thought

Of his Companion, he would pray that both
(Now that their earthly duties were fulfilled)
Might die in the same moment. Nor in vain
So prayed he: — as our Chronicles report,
Though here the Hermit numbered his last day,
Far from St. Cuthbert his beloved Friend,
Those holy Men both died in the same hour.

THE PRIORESS'S TALE.

(FROM CHAUCER.)

“ Call up him who left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold.”

In the following Poem I have allowed myself no further deviation from the original than was necessary for the fluent reading and instant understanding of the Author: so much, however, is the language altered since Chaucer's time, especially in pronunciation, that much was to be removed, and its place supplied with as little incongruity as possible. The ancient accent has been retained in a few conjunctions, as, *also* and *alway*, from a conviction that such sprinklings of antiquity would be admitted, by persons of taste, to have a graceful accordance with the subject. The fierce bigotry of the Prioress forms a fine back-ground for her tender-hearted sympathies with the Mother and Child; and the mode in which the story is told amply atones for the extravagance of the miracle.

“ O LORD, our Lord! how wondrously,” (quoth she)
“ Thy name in this large world is spread abroad!
For not alone by men of dignity
Thy worship is performed and precious laud;
But by the mouths of children, gracious God!
Thy goodness is set forth, they when they lie
Upon the breast thy name do glorify.

“ Wherefore in praise, the worthiest that I may,
Jesu! of thee, and the white Lily-flower
Which did thee bear, and is a Maid for aye,
To tell a story I will use my power;
Not that I may increase her honour's dower,
For she herself is honour, and the root
Of goodness, next her Son, our soul's best boot.

“ O Mother Maid! O Maid and Mother free!
O bush unburnt! burning in Moses' sight!
That down didst ravish from the Deity,
Through humbleness, the spirit that did alight
Upon thy heart, whence, through that glory's might,
Conceivèd was the Father's sapience,
Help me to tell it in thy reverence!

“ Lady, thy goodness, thy magnificence,
Thy virtue, and thy great humility,
Surpass all science and all utterance;
For sometimes, Lady! ere men pray to thee
Thou goest before in thy benignity,
The light to us vouchsafing of thy prayer,
To be our guide unto thy Son so dear.

“ My knowledge is so weak, O blissful Queen!
To tell abroad thy mighty worthiness,
That I the weight of it may not sustain;
But as a child of twelvemonths old or less,
That laboureth his language to express,
Even so fare I; and therefore, I thee pray,
Guide thou my song which I of thee shall say.

“ There was in Asia, in a mighty town,
’Mong Christian folk, a street where Jews might be,
Assigned to them and given them for their own
By a great Lord, for gain and usury,
Hateful to Christ and to his company;
And through this street who list might ride and wend;
Free was it, and unbarred at either end.

“ A little school of Christian people stood
Down at the farther end, in which there were
A nest of children come of Christian blood,
That learned in that school from year to year
Such sort of doctrine as men used there,
That is to say, to sing and read alsò,
As little children in their childhood do.

“ Among these children was a Widow’s son,
A little scholar, scarcely seven years old,
Who day by day unto this school hath gone,
And eke, when he the image did behold
Of Jesu’s Mother, as he had been told,
This Child was wont to kneel adown and say
Ave Marie, as he goeth by the way.

“ This Widow thus her little Son hath taught
Our blissful Lady, Jesu’s Mother dear,
To worship aye, and he forgat it not,
For simple infant hath a ready ear.
Sweet is the holiness of youth: and hence,
Calling to mind this matter when I may,
Saint Nicholas in my presence standeth aye,
For he so young to Christ did reverence.

“ This little Child, while in the school he sate
His primer conning with an earnest cheer,
The whilst the rest their anthem-book repeat
The *Alma Redemptoris* did he hear;
And as he durst he drew him near and near,
And hearkened to the words and to the note,
Till the first verse he learned it all by rote.

“ This Latin knew he nothing what it said,
For he too tender was of age to know;
But to his comrade he repaired, and prayed
That he the meaning of this song would show,
And unto him declare why men sing so;
This oftentimes, that he might be at ease,
This child did him beseech on his bare knees.

“ His Schoolfellow, who elder was than he,
Answered him thus: — ‘ This song, I have heard say,
Was fashioned for our blissful Lady free;
Her to salute, and also her to pray
To be our help upon our dying day.
If there is more in this, I know it not;
Song do I learn, — small grammar I have got.’

“ ‘ And is this song fashioned in reverence
Of Jesu’s Mother?’ said this Innocent;
‘ Now, certès, I will use my diligence
To con it all ere Christmas-tide be spent;
Although I for my Primer shall be shent,
And shall be beaten three times in an hour,
Our Lady I will praise with all my power.’

“ His Schoolfellow, whom he had so besought,
As they went homeward taught him privily;
And then he sang it well and fearlessly,
From word to word according to the note:
Twice in a day it passèd through his throat;
Homeward and schoolward whensoever he went,
On Jesu's Mother fixed was his intent.

“ Through all the Jewry (this before said I)
This little Child, as he came to and fro,
Full merrily then would he sing and cry,
O Alma Redemptoris! high and low:
The sweetness of Christ's Mother piercèd so
His heart, that her to praise, to her to pray,
He cannot stop his singing by the way.

“ The Serpent, Satan, our first foe, that hath
His wasp's nest in Jew's heart, upswelled — ‘ O woe,
O Hebrew people!’ said he in his wrath,
‘ Is it an honest thing? Shall this be so?
That such a Boy where'er he lists shall go
In your despite, and sing his hymns and saws,
Which is against the reverence of our laws!’

“ From that day forward have the Jews conspired
Out of the world this Innocent to chase;
And to this end a Homicide they hired,
That in an Alley had a privy place,
And, as the Child 'gan to the School to pace,
This cruel Jew him seized, and held him fast
And cut his throat, and in a pit him cast.

“ I say that him into a pit they threw,
A loathsome pit, whence noisome scents exhale;
O cursed folk! away, ye Herods new!
What may your ill intentions you avail?
Murder will out; certes it will not fail;
Know, that the honour of high God may spread,
The blood cries out on your accursèd deed.

“ ‘ O Martyr ’stablished in virginity!
Now mayest thou sing for aye before the throne,
Following the Lamb celestial,’ quoth she,
‘ Of which the great Evangelist, Saint John,
In Patmos wrote, who saith of them that go
Before the Lamb singing continually,
That never fleshly woman they did know.’

“ Now this poor widow waiteth all that night
After her little Child, and he came not;
For which, by earliest glimpse of morning light,
With face all pale with dread and busy thought,
She at the School and elsewhere him hath sought,
Until thus far she learned, that he had been
In the Jews’ street, and there he last was seen.

“ With Mother’s pity in her breast enclosed
She goeth, as she were half out of her mind,
To every place wherein she hath supposed
By likelihood her little Son to find;
And ever on Christ’s Mother meek and kind
She cried, till to the Jewry she was brought,
And him among the accursèd Jews she sought.

“ She asketh, and she piteously doth pray
To every Jew that dwelleth in that place
To tell her if her child had passed that way;
They all said, Nay; but Jesu of his grace
Gave to her thought, that in a little space
She for her Son in that same spot did cry
Where he was cast into a pit hard by.

“ O thou great God that dost perform thy laud
By mouths of Innocents, lo! here thy might;
This gem of chastity, this emerald,
And eke of martyrdom this ruby bright,
There, where with mangled throat he lay upright,
The *Alma Redemptoris* 'gan to sing
So loud, that with his voice the place did ring.

“ The Christian folk that through the Jewry went
Come to the spot in wonder at the thing;
And hastily they for the Provost sent;
Immediately he came, not tarrying,
And praiseth Christ that is our heavenly King,
And eke his Mother, honour of Mankind:
Which done, he bade that they the Jews should bind.

“ This Child with piteous lamentation then
Was taken up, singing his song alway;
And with procession great and pomp of men
To the next Abbey him they bare away;
His Mother swooning by the Bier lay:
And scarcely could the people that were near
Remove this second Rachel from the Bier.

“ Torment and shameful death to every one
This Provost doth for those bad Jews prepare
That of this murder wist, and that anon:
Such wickedness his judgments cannot spare;
Who will do evil, evil shall he bear;
Them therefore with wild horses did he draw,
And after that he hung them by the law.

“ Upon his Bier this Innocent doth lie
Before the Altar while the Mass doth last:
The Abbot with his Convent's company
Then sped themselves to bury him full fast;
And, when they holy water on him cast,
Yet spake this Child when sprinkled was the water,
And sang, *O Alma Redemptoris Mater!*

“ This Abbot, for he was a holy man,
As all Monks are, or surely ought to be,
In supplication to the Child began
Thus saying, ‘ O dear Child! I summon thee
In virtue of the holy Trinity
Tell me the cause why thou dost sing this hymn,
Since that thy throat is cut, as it doth seem.’

“ ‘ My throat is cut unto the bone, I trow,’
Said this young Child, ‘ and by the law of kind
I should have died, yea many hours ago;
But Jesus Christ, as in the books ye find,
Will that his glory last, and be in mind;
And, for the worship of his Mother dear,
Yet may I sing, *O Alma!* loud and clear.

“ ‘ This well of mercy Jesu’s Mother sweet
After my knowledge I have loved alway,
And in the hour when I my death did meet
To me she came, and thus to me did say,
“ Thou in thy dying sing this holy lay,”
As ye have heard; and soon as I had sung
Methought she laid a grain upon my tongue.

“ ‘ Wherefore I sing, nor can from song refrain,
In honour of that blissful Maiden free,
Till from my tongue off-taken is the grain;
And after that thus said she unto me,
“ My little Child, then will I come for thee
Soon as the grain from off thy tongue they take:
Be not dismayed, I will not thee forsake!”’

“ This holy Monk, this Abbot — him mean I,
Touched then his tongue, and took away the grain;
And he gave up the ghost full peacefully;
And, when the Abbot had this wonder seen,
His salt tears trickled down like showers of rain,
And on his face he dropped upon the ground,
And still he lay as if he had been bound.

“ Eke the whole Convent on the pavement lay,
Weeping and praising Jesu’s Mother dear;
And after that they rose, and took their way,
And lifted up this Martyr from the Bier,
And in a tomb of precious marble clear
Enclosed his uncorrupted body sweet. —
Where’er he be, God grant us him to meet!

“ Young Hew of Lincoln! in like sort laid low
By cursed Jews — thing well and widely known,
For not long since was dealt the cruel blow,
Pray also thou for us, while here we tarry
Weak sinful folk, that God, with pitying eye,
In mercy would his mercy multiply
On us, for reverence of his Mother Mary!”

ESSAY,

SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE PREFACE.

WITH the young of both Sexes, Poetry is, like love, a passion ; but, for much the greater part of those who have been proud of its power over their minds, a necessity soon arises of breaking the pleasing bondage ; or it relaxes of itself ;—the thoughts being occupied in domestic cares, or the time engrossed by business. Poetry then becomes only an occasional recreation ; while to those whose existence passes away in a course of fashionable pleasure, it is a species of luxurious amusement. — In middle and declining age, a scattered number of serious persons resort to poetry, as to religion, for a protection against the pressure of trivial employments, and as a consolation for the afflictions of life. And, lastly, there are many, who, having been enamoured of this art in their youth, have found leisure, after youth was spent, to cultivate general literature ; in which poetry has continued to be comprehended *as a study*.

Into the above Classes the Readers of poetry may be divided ; Critics abound in them all ; but from the last only can opinions be collected of absolute value, and worthy to be depended upon, as prophetic of the destiny of a new work. The young, who in nothing can escape delusion, are especially subject to it in their intercourse with Poetry. The cause, not so

obvious as the fact is unquestionable, is the same as that from which erroneous judgments in this art, in the minds of men of all ages, chiefly proceed; but upon Youth it operates with peculiar force. The appropriate business of poetry, (which, nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science,) her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses* and to the *passions*. What a world of delusion does this acknowledged principle prepare for the inexperienced! what temptations to go astray are here held forth for them whose thoughts have been little disciplined by the understanding, and whose feelings revolt from the sway of reason! — When a juvenile Reader is in the height of his rapture with some vicious passage, should experience throw in doubts, or common-sense suggest suspicions, a lurking consciousness that the realities of the Muse are but shows, and that her liveliest excitements are raised by transient shocks of conflicting feeling and successive assemblages of contradictory thoughts—is ever at hand to justify extravagance, and to sanction absurdity. But, it may be asked, as these illusions are unavoidable, and, no doubt, eminently useful to the mind as a process, what good can be gained by making observations, the tendency of which is to diminish the confidence of youth in its feelings, and thus to abridge its innocent and even profitable pleasures? The reproach implied in the question could not be warded off, if Youth were incapable of being delighted with what is truly excellent; or, if these errors always terminated of themselves in due season. But, with the majority, though their force be abated, they continue through life. Moreover, the fire of youth is too vivacious an element to be extinguished or damped by a philosophical remark; and, while there is no danger that what has been said will be injurious or painful to the ardent and the confident, it may prove beneficial to those who, being enthusiastic, are, at the same time, modest

and ingenuous. The intimation may unite with their own misgivings to regulate their sensibility, and to bring in, sooner than it would otherwise have arrived, a more discreet and sound judgment.

If it should excite wonder that men of ability, in later life, whose understandings have been rendered acute by practice in affairs, should be so easily and so far imposed upon when they happen to take up a new work in verse, this appears to be the cause;—that, having discontinued their attention to poetry, whatever progress may have been made in other departments of knowledge, they have not, as to this art, advanced in true discernment beyond the age of youth. If, then, a new poem falls in their way, whose attractions are of that kind which would have enraptured them during the heat of youth, the judgment not being improved to a degree that they shall be disgusted, they are dazzled; and prize and cherish the faults for having had power to make the present time vanish before them, and to throw the mind back, as by enchantment, into the happiest season of life. As they read, powers seem to be revived, passions are regenerated, and pleasures restored. The Book was probably taken up after an escape from the burthen of business, and with a wish to forget the world, and all its vexations and anxieties. Having obtained this wish, and so much more, it is natural that they should make report as they have felt.

If Men of mature age, through want of practice, be thus easily beguiled into admiration of absurdities, extravagances, and misplaced ornaments, thinking it proper that their understandings should enjoy a holiday, while they are unbending their minds with verse, it may be expected that such Readers will resemble their former selves also in strength of prejudice, and an inaptitude to be moved by the unostentatious beauties

of a pure style. In the higher poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflection of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself, when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments. But it is a well-known property of human nature, that our estimates are ever governed by comparisons, of which we are conscious with various degrees of distinctness. Is it not, then, inevitable (confining these observations to the effects of style merely) that an eye, accustomed to the glaring hues of diction by which such Readers are caught and excited, will for the most part be rather repelled than attracted by an original Work, the colouring of which is disposed according to a pure and refined scheme of harmony? It is in the fine arts as in the affairs of life, no man can *serve* (i. e. obey with zeal and fidelity) two Masters.

As Poetry is most just to its own divine origin when it administers the comforts and breathes the spirit of religion, they who have learned to perceive this truth, and who betake themselves to reading verse for sacred purposes, must be preserved from numerous illusions to which the two Classes of Readers, whom we have been considering, are liable. But, as the mind grows serious from the weight of life, the range of its passions is contracted accordingly; and its sympathies become so exclusive, that many species of high excellence wholly escape, or but languidly excite, its notice. Besides, men who read from religious or moral inclinations, even when the subject is of that kind which they approve, are beset with misconceptions and mistakes peculiar to themselves. Attaching so much importance to the truths which interest them, they are prone to over-rate the Authors by whom these truths are expressed and enforced. They come prepared to impart so much passion to the Poet's language, that they remain unconscious how little, in fact, they

receive from it. And, on the other hand, religious faith is to him who holds it so momentous a thing, and error appears to be attended with such tremendous consequences, that, if opinions touching upon religion occur which the Reader condemns, he not only cannot sympathise with them, however animated the expression, but there is, for the most part, an end put to all satisfaction and enjoyment. Love, if it before existed, is converted into dislike ; and the heart of the Reader is set against the Author and his book. — To these excesses, they, who from their professions ought to be the most guarded against them, are perhaps the most liable ; I mean those sects whose religion, being from the calculating understanding, is cold and formal. For when Christianity, the religion of humility, is founded upon the proudest faculty of our nature, what can be expected but contradictions ? Accordingly, believers of this cast are at one time contemptuous ; at another, being troubled, as they are and must be, with inward misgivings, they are jealous and suspicious ; — and at all seasons, they are under temptation to supply, by the heat with which they defend their tenets, the animation which is wanting to the constitution of the religion itself.

Faith was given to man that his affections, detached from the treasures of time, might be inclined to settle upon those of eternity ; — the elevation of his nature, which this habit produces on earth, being to him a presumptive evidence of a future state of existence ; and giving him a title to partake of its holiness. The religious man values what he sees chiefly as an “imperfect shadowing forth” of what he is incapable of seeing. The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without relieving itself by resting a great part of the burthen upon words and symbols. The commerce between Man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and

the Infinite Being accommodates himself to a finite capacity. In all this may be perceived the affinity between religion and poetry ; — between religion — making up the deficiencies of reason by faith ; and poetry — passionate for the instruction of reason ; between religion — whose element is infinitude, and whose ultimate trust is the supreme of things, submitting herself to circumscription, and reconciled to substitutions ; and poetry — ethereal and transcendent, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation. In this community of nature may be perceived also the lurking incitements of kindred error ; — so that we shall find that no poetry has been more subject to distortion, than that species, the argument and scope of which is religious ; and no lovers of the art have gone farther astray than the pious and the devout.

Whither then shall we turn for that union of qualifications which must necessarily exist before the decisions of a critic can be of absolute value ? For a mind at once poetical and philosophical ; for a critic whose affections are as free and kindly as the spirit of society, and whose understanding is severe as that of dispassionate government ? Where are we to look for that initiatory composure of mind which no selfishness can disturb ? For a natural sensibility that has been tutored into correctness without losing any thing of its quickness ; and for active faculties capable of answering the demands which an Author of original imagination shall make upon them, — associated with a judgment that cannot be duped into admiration by aught that is unworthy of it ? — Among those and those only, who, never having suffered their youthful love of poetry to remit much of its force, have applied to the consideration of the laws of this art the best power of their understandings. At the same time it must be observed — that, as this Class comprehends the only judgments which are trust-worthy, so does it include the most erroneous and perverse. For to be

mis-taught is worse than to be untaught; and no perverseness equals that which is supported by system, no errors are so difficult to root out as those which the understanding has pledged its credit to uphold. In this Class are contained Censors, who, if they be pleased with what is good, are pleased with it only by imperfect glimpses, and upon false principles; who, should they generalise rightly to a certain point, are sure to suffer for it in the end; — who, if they stumble upon a sound rule, are fettered by misapplying it, or by straining it too far; being incapable of perceiving when it ought to yield to one of higher order. In it are found Critics too petulant to be passive to a genuine Poet, and too feeble to grapple with him; Men, who take upon them to report of the course which *he* holds whom they are utterly unable to accompany, — confounded if he turn quick upon the wing, dismayed if he soar steadily “into the region;” — Men of palsied imaginations and indurated hearts; in whose minds all healthy action is languid, — who therefore feed as the many direct them, or, with the many, are greedy after vicious provocatives; — Judges, whose censure is auspicious, and whose praise ominous! In this class meet together the two extremes of best and worst.

The observations presented in the foregoing series are of too ungracious a nature to have been made without reluctance; and, were it only on this account, I would invite the reader to try them by the test of comprehensive experience. If the number of Judges who can be confidently relied upon be in reality so small, it ought to follow that partial notice only, or neglect, perhaps long continued, or attention wholly inadequate to their merits — must have been the fate of most works in the higher departments of poetry; and that, on the other hand, numerous productions have blazed into popularity, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them: — it will be further found, that when Authors have, at length, raised themselves

into general admiration and maintained their ground, errors and prejudices have prevailed concerning their genius and their works, which the few who are conscious of those errors and prejudices would deplore; if they were not recompensed by perceiving that there are select Spirits for whom it is ordained that their fame shall be in the world an existence like that of Virtue, which owes its being to the struggles it makes, and its vigour to the enemies whom it provokes; — a vivacious quality, ever doomed to meet with opposition, and still triumphing over it; and, from the nature of its dominion, incapable of being brought to the sad conclusion of Alexander, when he wept that there were no more worlds for him to conquer.

Let us take a hasty retrospect of the poetical literature of this Country for the greater part of the last two Centuries, and see if the facts support these inferences.

Who is there that can now endure to read the “Creation” of Dubartas? Yet all Europe once resounded with his praise; he was caressed by Kings; and, when his Poem was translated into our language, the Faery Queen faded before it. The name of Spenser, whose genius is of a higher order than even that of Ariosto, is at this day scarcely known beyond the limits of the British Isles. And if the value of his works is to be estimated from the attention now paid to them by his Countrymen, compared with that which they bestow on those of some other writers, it must be pronounced small indeed.

“The laurel, meed of mighty Conquerors
And Poets *sage*” —

are his own words; but his wisdom has, in this particular, been his worst enemy; while its opposite, whether in the shape of folly or madness, has been *their* best friend. But he was a

great power; and bears a high name: the laurel has been awarded to him.

A Dramatic Author, if he write for the Stage, must adapt himself to the taste of the Audience, or they will not endure him; accordingly the mighty genius of Shakspeare was listened to. The people were delighted: but I am not sufficiently versed in Stage antiquities to determine whether they did not flock as eagerly to the representation of many pieces of contemporary Authors, wholly undeserving to appear upon the same boards. Had there been a formal contest for superiority among dramatic Writers, that Shakspeare, like his predecessors, Sophocles and Euripides, would have often been subject to the mortification of seeing the prize adjudged to sorry competitors, becomes too probable, when we reflect that the Admirers of Settle and Shadwell were, in a later age, as numerous, and reckoned as respectable in point of talent, as those of Dryden. At all events, that Shakspeare stooped to accommodate himself to the People, is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius, is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from having some advantage over him in public estimation; else how can we account for passages and scenes that exist in his works, unless upon a supposition that some of the grossest of them, a fact which in my own mind I have no doubt of, were foisted in by the Players, for the gratification of the many?

But that his Works, whatever might be their reception upon the stage, made little impression upon the ruling Intellects of the time, may be inferred from the fact that Lord Bacon, in his multifarious writings, nowhere either quotes or alludes to

him. * — His dramatic excellence enabled him to resume possession of the stage after the Restoration ; but Dryden tells us that in his time two of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were acted for one of Shakspeare. And so faint and limited was the perception of the poetic beauties of his dramas in the time of Pope, that, in his Edition of the Plays, with a view of rendering to the general Reader a necessary service, he printed between inverted commas those passages which he thought most worthy of notice.

At this day, the French Critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our Nation : “ the English, with their Buffon de Shakspeare,” is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French Theatre ; an advantage which the Parisian Critic owed to his German blood and German education. The most enlightened Italians, though well acquainted with our language, are wholly incompetent to measure the proportions of Shakspeare. The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the Poet : for among us it is a current, I might say, an established opinion, that Shakspeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be “ a wild irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties.” How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakspeare in the selection of his materials, and

* The learned Hakewill (a 3d edition of whose book bears date 1635), writing to refute the error “ touching Nature’s perpetual and universal decay,” cites triumphantly the names of Ariosto, Tasso, Bartas, and Spenser, as instances that poetic genius had not degenerated ; but he makes no mention of Shakspeare.

in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature!

There is extant a small Volume of miscellaneous Poems in which Shakspeare expresses his own feelings in his own Person. It is not difficult to conceive that the Editor, George Steevens, should have been insensible to the beauties of one portion of that Volume, the Sonnets; though there is not a part of the writings of this Poet where is found, in an equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed. But, from regard to the Critic's own credit, he would not have ventured to talk of an * act of parliament not being strong enough to compel the perusal of these, or any production of Shakspeare, if he had not known that the people of England were ignorant of the treasures contained in those little pieces: and if he had not, moreover, shared the too common propensity of human nature to exult over a supposed fall into the mire of a genius whom he had been compelled to regard with admiration, as an inmate of the celestial regions, — “there sitting where he durst not soar.”

Nine years before the death of Shakspeare, Milton was born; and early in life he published several small poems, which, though on their first appearance they were praised by a few of the judicious, were afterwards neglected to that degree, that Pope in his youth, could borrow from them without risk of its being known. Whether these poems are at this day justly appre-

* This flippant insensibility was publicly reprehended by Mr. Coleridge in a course of Lectures upon Poetry given by him at the Royal Institution. For the various merits of thought and language in Shakspeare's Sonnets see Numbers 27. 29, 30. 32, 33. 54. 64. 66. 68. 73. 76. 86. 91, 92, 93. 97, 98. 105. 107. 108, 109. 111. 113. 114. 116, 117. 129. and many others.

ciated I will not undertake to decide: nor would it imply a severe reflection upon the mass of Readers to suppose the contrary; seeing that a Man of the acknowledged genius of Voss, the German Poet, could suffer their spirit to evaporate; and could change their character, as is done in the translation made by him of the most popular of those pieces. At all events, it is certain that these Poems of Milton are now much read, and loudly praised; yet were they little heard of till more than 150 years after their publication; and of the Sonnets, Dr. Johnson, as appears from Boswell's Life of him, was in the habit of thinking and speaking as contemptuously as Steevens wrote upon those of Shakspeare.

About the time when the Pindaric Odes of Cowley and his imitators, and the productions of that class of curious thinkers whom Dr. Johnson has strangely styled Metaphysical Poets, were beginning to lose something of that extravagant admiration which they had excited, the *Paradise Lost* made its appearance. "Fit audience find though few," was the petition addressed by the Poet to his inspiring Muse. I have said elsewhere that he gained more than he asked; this I believe to be true; but Dr. Johnson has fallen into a gross mistake when he attempts to prove, by the sale of the work, that Milton's Countrymen were "*just to it*" upon its first appearance. Thirteen hundred Copies were sold in two years; an uncommon example, he asserts, of the prevalence of genius in opposition to so much recent enmity as Milton's public conduct had excited. But, be it remembered that, if Milton's political and religious opinions, and the manner in which he announced them, had raised him many enemies, they had procured him numerous friends; who, as all personal danger was passed away at the time of publication, would be eager to procure the master-work of a Man whom they revered, and whom they would be proud of praising. The demand did not immediately increase; "for,"

says Dr. Johnson, "many more Readers" (he means Persons in the habit of reading poetry) "than were supplied at first the Nation did not afford." How careless must a writer be who can make this assertion in the face of so many existing title-pages to belie it! Turning to my own shelves, I find the folio of Cowley, 7th Edition, 1681. A book near it is Flatman's Poems, 4th Edition, 1686. Waller, 5th Edition, same date. The Poems of Norris of Bemerton not long after went, I believe, through nine Editions. What further demand there might be for these works I do not know, but I well remember, that 25 years ago, the Booksellers' stalls in London swarmed with the folios of Cowley. This is not mentioned in disparagement of that able writer and amiable Man; but merely to show — that, if Milton's work was not more read, it was not because readers did not exist at the time. The early Editions of the Paradise Lost were printed in a shape which allowed them to be sold at a low price, yet only 3000 copies of the Work were sold in 11 years; and the Nation, says Dr. Johnson, had been satisfied from 1623 to 1644, that is 41 years, with only two Editions of the Works of Shakspeare; which probably did not together make 1000 Copies; facts adduced by the critic to prove the "paucity of Readers." — There were Readers in multitudes; but their money went for other purposes, as their admiration was fixed elsewhere. We are authorized, then, to affirm, that the reception of the Paradise Lost, and the slow progress of its fame, are proofs as striking as can be desired that the positions which I am attempting to establish are not erroneous.* — How amusing to shape to one's self such a critique as a Wit of Charles's days, or a Lord of the Miscellanies or trading Journalist of King William's time, would have brought

* Hughes is express upon this subject: in his dedication of Spenser's Works to Lord Somers, he writes thus. "It was your Lordship's encouraging a beautiful Edition of Paradise Lost that first brought that incomparable Poem to be generally known and esteemed."

forth, if he had set his faculties industriously to work upon this Poem, every where impregnated with *original* excellence !

So strange indeed are the obliquities of admiration, that they whose opinions are much influenced by authority will often be tempted to think that there are no fixed principles* in human nature for this art to rest upon. I have been honoured by being permitted to peruse in MS. a tract composed between the period of the Revolution and the close of that Century. It is the Work of an English Peer of high accomplishments, its object to form the character and direct the studies of his Son. Perhaps nowhere does a more beautiful treatise of the kind exist. The good sense and wisdom of the thoughts, the delicacy of the feelings, and the charm of the style, are, throughout, equally conspicuous. Yet the Author, selecting among the Poets of his own Country those whom he deems most worthy of his son's perusal, particularises only Lord Rochester, Sir John Denham, and Cowley. Writing about the same time, Shaftesbury, an Author at present unjustly depreciated, describes the English Muses as only yet lisping in their Cradles.

The arts by which Pope, soon afterwards, contrived to procure to himself a more general and a higher reputation than perhaps any English Poet ever attained during his life-time, are known to the judicious. And as well known is it to them, that the undue exertion of these arts is the cause why Pope has for some time held a rank in literature, to which, if he had not been seduced by an over-love of immediate popularity, and had confided more in his native genius, he never could have descended. He bewitched the nation by his melody, and daz-

* This opinion seems actually to have been entertained by Adam Smith, the worst critic, David Hume not excepted, that Scotland, a soil to which this sort of weed seems natural, has produced.

zled it by his polished style, and was himself blinded by his own success. Having wandered from humanity in his Eclogues with boyish inexperience, the praise, which these compositions obtained, tempted him into a belief that Nature was not to be trusted, at least in pastoral Poetry. To prove this by example, he put his friend Gay upon writing those Eclogues which the Author intended to be burlesque. The Instigator of the work, and his Admirers, could perceive in them nothing but what was ridiculous. Nevertheless, though these Poems contain some detestable passages, the effect, as Dr. Johnson well observes, "of reality and truth became conspicuous even when the intention was to show them grovelling and degraded." These Pastorals, ludicrous to those who prided themselves upon their refinement, in spite of those disgusting passages, "became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations."

Something less than 60 years after the publication of the *Paradise Lost* appeared Thomson's *Winter*; which was speedily followed by his other Seasons. It is a work of inspiration; much of it is written from himself, and nobly from himself. How was it received? "It was no sooner read," says one of his contemporary Biographers, "than universally admired: those only excepted who had not been used to feel, or to look for any thing in poetry, beyond a *point* of satirical or epigrammatic wit, a smart *antithesis* richly trimmed with rhyme, or the softness of an *elegiac* complaint. To such his manly classical spirit could not readily commend itself; till, after a more attentive perusal, they had got the better of their prejudices, and either acquired or affected a truer taste. A few others stood aloof, merely because they had long before fixed the articles of their poetical creed, and resigned themselves to an absolute despair of ever seeing any thing new and original. These were somewhat mortified to find their notions disturbed by the appearance of a poet, who seemed to owe nothing but to nature

and his own genius. But, in a short time, the applause became unanimous ; every one wondering how so many pictures, and pictures so familiar, should have moved them but faintly to what they felt in his descriptions. His digressions too, the overflowings of a tender benevolent heart, charmed the reader no less ; leaving him in doubt, whether he should more admire the Poet or love the Man."

This case appears to bear strongly against us : — but we must distinguish between wonder and legitimate admiration. The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of nature by the revolution of the year : and, by undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a Poet. Now it is remarkable that, excepting the nocturnal Reverie of Lady Winchelsea, and a passage or two in the Windsor Forest of Pope, the Poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the *Paradise Lost* and the *Seasons* does not contain a single new image of external nature ; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden has executed a description of Night in one of his Tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated moonlight scene in the *Iliad*. A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily depict these appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines are vague, bombastic, and senseless* ;

* *CORTES alone in a night-gown.*

All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead :
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head.

those of Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory. The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten; those of Pope still retain their hold upon public estimation,—nay, there is not a passage of descriptive poetry, which at this day finds so many and such ardent admirers. Strange to think of an Enthusiast, as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moonlight sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their absurdity! — If these two distinguished Writers could habitually think that the visible universe was of so little consequence to a Poet, that it was scarcely necessary for him to cast his eyes upon it, we may be assured that those passages of the elder Poets which faithfully and poetically describe the phenomena of nature, were not at that time holden in much estimation, and that there was little accurate attention paid to these appearances.

Wonder is the natural product of Ignorance; and as the soil was *in such good condition* at the time of the publication of the Seasons, the crop was doubtless abundant. Neither individuals nor nations become corrupt all at once, nor are they enlightened in a moment. Thomson was an inspired Poet, but he could not work miracles; in cases where the art of seeing had in some degree been learned, the teacher would further the proficiency of his pupils, but he could do little *more*, though so far does vanity assist men in acts of self-deception, that many would often fancy they recognised a likeness when they knew nothing of the original. Having shown that much of what his Biographer deemed genuine admiration must in fact have been blind won-

The little Birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping Flowers beneath the Night-dew sweat:
Even Lust and Envy sleep; yet Love denies
Rest to my soul, and slumber to my eyes.

DRYDEN'S *Indian Emperor*.

derment, — how is the rest to be accounted for? — Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his Poem, which seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one : in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style ; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind which would be most likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with sentimental common-places, that, from the manner in which they were brought forward, bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well-used Copy of the Seasons the Book generally opens of itself with the rhapsody on love, or with one of the stories (perhaps Damon and Musidora) ; these also are prominent in our Collections of Extracts ; and are the parts of his Work, which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice. Pope, repaying praises which he had received, and wishing to extol him to the highest, only styles him “an elegant and philosophical Poet ;” nor are we able to collect any unquestionable proofs that the true characteristics of Thomson’s genius as an imaginative Poet * were perceived, till the elder Warton, almost 40 years after the publication of the Seasons, pointed them out by a note in his Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope. In the Castle of Indolence (of which Gray speaks so coldly) these characteristics were almost as conspicuously displayed, and in verse more harmonious, and diction more pure. Yet that fine Poem was neglected on its appearance, and is at this day the delight only of a Few !

When Thomson died, Collins breathed forth his regrets in an Elegiac Poem, in which he pronounces a poetical curse upon

* Since these observations upon Thomson were written, I have perused the 2d Edition of his Seasons, and find that even that does not contain the most striking passages which Warton points out for admiration ; these, with other improvements, throughout the whole work, must have been added at a later period.

him who should regard with insensibility the place where the Poet's remains were deposited. The Poems of the mourner himself have now passed through innumerable Editions, and are universally known; but if, when Collins died, the same kind of imprecation had been pronounced by a surviving admirer, small is the number whom it would not have comprehended. The notice which his poems attained during his life-time was so small, and of course the sale so insignificant, that not long before his death he deemed it right to repay to the Bookseller the sum which he had advanced for them, and threw the Edition into the fire.

Next in importance to the Seasons of Thomson, though at considerable distance from that work in order of time, come the Relics of Ancient English Poetry; collected, new-modelled, and in many instances (if such a contradiction in terms may be used) composed by the Editor, Dr. Percy. This work did not steal silently into the world, as is evident from the number of legendary tales, which appeared not long after its publication; and which were modelled, as the Authors persuaded themselves, after the Old Ballad. The Compilation was however ill suited to the then existing taste of City society; and Dr. Johnson, 'mid the little senate to which he gave laws, was not sparing in his exertions to make it an object of contempt. The Critic triumphed, the legendary imitators were deservedly disregarded, and, as undeservedly, their ill-imitated models sank, in this Country, into temporary neglect; while Burger, and other able writers of Germany, were translating, or imitating these Reliques, and composing, with the aid of inspiration thence derived, Poems which are the delight of the German nation. Dr. Percy was so abashed by the ridicule flung upon his labours from the ignorance and insensibility of the Persons with whom he lived, that, though while he was writing under a mask he had not wanted resolution to follow

his genius into the regions of true simplicity and genuine pathos (as is evinced by the exquisite ballad of Sir Cauline and by many other pieces), yet when he appeared in his own person and character as a poetical writer, he adopted, as in the tale of the Hermit of Warkworth, a diction scarcely in any one of its features distinguishable from the vague, the glossy, and unfeeling language of his day. I mention this remarkable fact* with regret, esteeming the genius of Dr. Percy in this kind of writing superior to that of any other man by whom in modern times it has been cultivated. That even Burger (to whom Klopstock gave, in my hearing, a commendation which he denied to Göethe and Schiller, pronouncing him to be a genuine Poet, and one of the few among the Germans whose works would last,) had not the fine sensibility of Percy, might be shown from many passages, in which he has deserted his original only to go astray. For example,

Now daye was gone, and night was come,
And all were fast asleepe,
All save the Lady Emeline,
Who sate in her bowre to weepe :

And soone she heard her true Love's voice
Low whispering at the walle,
Awake, awake, my dear Ladye,
'Tis I thy true-love call,

* Shenstone, in his Schoolmistress, gives a still more remarkable instance of this timidity. On its first appearance, (See D'Israeli's 2d Series of the Curiosities of Literature) the Poem was accompanied with an absurd prose commentary, showing, as indeed some incongruous expressions in the text imply, that the whole was intended for burlesque. In subsequent editions, the commentary was dropped, and the People have since continued to read in seriousness, doing for the Author what he had not courage openly to venture upon for himself.

Which is thus tricked out and dilated :

Als nun die Nacht Gebirg' und Thal
Vermummt in Rabenschatten,
Und Hochburgs Lampen uber-all
Schon ausgeflimmert hatten,
Und alles tief entschlafen war ;
Doch nur das Fraulein immerdar,
Voll Fieberangst, noch wachte,
Und seinen Ritter dachte :
Da horch ! Ein susser Liebeston
Kam leis' empor geflogen.

“ Ho, Trudchen, ho ! Da bin ich schon !
Risch auf ! Dich angezogen ! ”

But from humble ballads we must ascend to heroics.

All hail, Macpherson ! hail to thee, Sire of Ossian ! The Phantom was begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition — it travelled southward, where it was greeted with acclamation, and the thin Consistence took its course through Europe, upon the breath of popular applause. The Editor of the “ Reliques ” had indirectly preferred a claim to the praise of invention, by not concealing that his supplementary labours were considerable ! how selfish his conduct, contrasted with that of the disinterested Gael, who, like Lear, gives his kingdom away, and is content to become a pensioner upon his own issue for a beggarly pittance ! — Open this far-famed Book ! — I have done so at random, and the beginning of the “ Epic Poem Temora,” in 8 Books, presents itself. “ The blue waves of Ullin roll in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Grey torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills with aged oaks surround a

narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king; the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds." Precious memorandums from the pocket-book of the blind Ossian!

If it be unbecoming, as I acknowledge that for the most part it is, to speak disrespectfully of Works that have enjoyed for a length of time a widely-spread reputation, without at the same time producing irrefragable proofs of their unworthiness, let me be forgiven upon this occasion. — Having had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous Country, from my very childhood I have felt the falsehood that pervades the volumes imposed upon the World under the name of Ossian. From what I saw with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious. In nature every thing is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness. In Macpherson's work it is exactly the reverse; every thing (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened, — yet nothing distinct. It will always be so when words are substituted for things. To say that the characters never could exist, that the manners are impossible, and that a dream has more substance than the whole state of society, as there depicted, is doing nothing more than pronouncing a censure which Macpherson defied; when, with the steeps of Morven before his eyes, he could talk so familiarly of his Carborne heroes; — of Morven, which, if one may judge from its appearance at the distance of a few miles, contains scarcely an acre of ground sufficiently accommodating for a sledge to be trailed along its surface. — Mr. Malcolm Laing has ably shown that the diction of this pretended translation is a motley assemblage from all quarters; but he is so fond of making out parallel passages as to call poor Macpherson to account for his very "*ands*" and his "*butts!*" and he has weakened his

argument by conducting it as if he thought that every striking resemblance was a *conscious* plagiarism. It is enough that the coincidences are too remarkable for its being probable or possible that they could arise in different minds without communication between them. Now as the Translators of the Bible, Shakspeare, Milton, and Pope, could not be indebted to Macpherson, it follows that he must have owed his fine feathers to them; unless we are prepared gravely to assert, with Madame de Stäel, that many of the characteristic beauties of our most celebrated English Poets are derived from the ancient Fingallian; in which case the modern translator would have been but giving back to Ossian his own. — It is consistent that Lucien Buonaparte, who could censure Milton for having surrounded Satan in the infernal regions with courtly and regal splendour, should pronounce the modern Ossian to be the glory of Scotland; — a Country that has produced a Dunbar, a Buchanan, a Thomson, and a Burns! These opinions are of ill omen for the Epic ambition of him who has given them to the world.

Yet, much as these pretended treasures of antiquity have been admired, they have been wholly uninfluential upon the literature of the Country. No succeeding Writer appears to have caught from them a ray of inspiration; no Author, in the least distinguished, has ventured formally to imitate them — except the Boy, Chatterton, on their first appearance. He had perceived, from the successful trials which he himself had made in literary forgery, how few critics were able to distinguish between a real ancient medal and a counterfeit of modern manufacture; and he set himself to the work of filling a Magazine with *Saxon poems*, — counterparts of those of Ossian, as like his as one of his misty stars is to another. This incapability to amalgamate with the literature of the Island, is, in my estimation, a decisive proof that the book is essentially

unnatural; nor should I require any other to demonstrate it to be a forgery, audacious as worthless. — Contrast, in this respect, the effect of Macpherson's publication with the *Reliques* of Percy, so unassuming, so modest in their pretensions! — I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this latter work; and for our own Country, its Poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think that there is an able Writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the *Reliques*; I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.

Dr. Johnson, more fortunate in his contempt of the labours of Macpherson than those of his modest friend, was solicited not long after to furnish Prefaces biographical and critical for the works of some of the most eminent English Poets. The Booksellers took upon themselves to make the collection; they referred probably to the most popular miscellanies, and, unquestionably, to their Books of accounts; and decided upon the claim of Authors to be admitted into a body of the most Eminent, from the familiarity of their names with the readers of that day, and by the profits, which, from the sale of his works, each had brought and was bringing to the Trade. The Editor was allowed a limited exercise of discretion, and the Authors whom he recommended are scarcely to be mentioned without a smile. We open the volume of Prefatory Lives, and to our astonishment the *first* name we find is that of Cowley! — What is become of the Morning-star of English Poetry? Where is the bright Elizabethan Constellation? Or, if Names be more acceptable than images, where is the ever-to-be-honoured Chaucer? where is Spencer? where Sidney? and, lastly, where he, whose rights as a Poet, contradistinguished from those which he is universally allowed to possess as a Dramatist, we have vindicated, — where Shakspeare? — These,

and a multitude of others not unworthy to be placed near them, their contemporaries and successors, we have *not*. But in their stead, we have (could better be expected when precedence was to be settled by an abstract of reputation at any given period made, as in this case before us?) Roscommon, and Stepney, and Phillips, and Walsh, and Smith, and Duke, and King, and Spratt — Halifax, Granville, Sheffield, Congreve, Broome, and other reputed Magnates: Writers in metre utterly worthless and useless, except for occasions like the present, when their productions are referred to as evidence what a small quantity of brain is necessary to procure a considerable stock of admiration, provided the aspirant will accommodate himself to the likings and fashions of his day.

As I do not mean to bring down this retrospect to our own times, it may with propriety be closed at the era of this distinguished event. From the literature of other ages and countries, proofs equally cogent might have been adduced, that the opinions announced in the former part of this Essay are founded upon truth. It was not an agreeable office, nor a prudent undertaking, to declare them; but their importance seemed to render it a duty. It may still be asked, where lies the particular relation of what has been said to these Volumes? — The question will be easily answered by the discerning Reader who is old enough to remember the taste that prevailed when some of these Poems were first published, 17 years ago; who has also observed to what degree the Poetry of this Island has since that period been coloured by them; and who is further aware of the unremitting hostility with which, upon some principle or other, they have each and all been opposed. A sketch of my own notion of the constitution of Fame has been given; and, as far as concerns myself, I have cause to be satisfied. The love, the admiration, the indifference, the slight, the aversion, and even the contempt, with which

these Poems have been received, knowing, as I do, the source within my own mind, from which they have proceeded, and the labour and pains, which, when labour and pains appeared needful, have been bestowed upon them, must all, if I think consistently, be received as pledges and tokens, bearing the same general impression, though widely different in value; — they are all proofs that for the present time I have not laboured in vain; and afford assurances, more or less authentic, that the products of my industry will endure.

If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of Poetical Works, it is this, — that every Author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed: so has it been, so will it continue to be. This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical Friend for the separation of whose Poems from my own I have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original Genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them; — and much he will have in common; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road: — he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.

And where lies the real difficulty of creating that taste by which a truly original Poet is to be relished? Is it in breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the prejudices of false refinement, and displacing the aversions of inexperience? Or, if he labour for an object which here and elsewhere I have proposed to myself, does it consist in divesting the Reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein Men differ from each other, to the exclusion of those in which all Men are alike, or the same; and in making him ashamed of the

vanity that renders him insensible of the appropriate excellence which civil arrangements, less unjust than might appear, and Nature illimitable in her bounty, have conferred on Men who stand below him in the scale of society? Finally, does it lie in establishing that dominion over the spirits of Readers by which they are to be humbled and humanised, in order that they may be purified and exalted?

If these ends are to be attained by the mere communication of *knowledge*, it does *not* lie here. — TASTE, I would remind the Reader, like IMAGINATION, is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them. It is a metaphor, taken from a *passive* sense of the human body, and transferred to things which are in their essence *not* passive, — to intellectual *acts* and *operations*. The word, Imagination, has been overstrained, from impulses honourable to mankind, to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the noblest of our nature. In the instance of Taste, the process has been reversed; and from the prevalence of dispositions at once injurious and discreditable, — being no other than that selfishness which is the child of apathy, — which, as Nations decline in productive and creative power, makes them value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging. Poverty of language is the primary cause of the use which we make of the word, Imagination; but the word, Taste, has been stretched to the sense which it bears in modern Europe by habits of self-conceit, inducing that inversion in the order of things whereby a passive faculty is made paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine arts. Proportion and congruity, the requisite knowledge being supposed, are subjects upon which taste may be trusted; it is competent to this office; — for in its intercourse with these the mind is *passive*, and is affected painfully or pleasurable as by an instinct. But the profound and the exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal

in thought and imagination ; or, in ordinary language, the pathetic and the sublime ; — are neither of them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty which could ever without a sinking in the spirit of Nations have been designated by the metaphor—*Taste*. And why ? Because without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions : without this auxiliary impulse, elevated or profound passion cannot exist.

Passion, it must be observed, is derived from a word which signifies *suffering* ; but the connection which suffering has with effort, with exertion, and *action*, is immediate and inseparable. How strikingly is this property of human nature exhibited by the fact, that, in popular language, to be in a passion, is to be angry ! — But,

“ Anger in hasty *words* or *blows*
Itself discharges on its foes.”

To be moved, then, by a passion, is to be excited, often to external, and always to internal, effort ; whether for the continuance and strengthening of the passion, or for its suppression, accordingly as the course which it takes may be painful or pleasurable. If the latter, the soul must contribute to its support, or it never becomes vivid, — and soon languishes, and dies. And this brings us to the point. If every great Poet with whose writings men are familiar, in the highest exercise of his genius, before he can be thoroughly enjoyed, has to call forth and to communicate *power*, this service, in a still greater degree, falls upon an original Writer, at his first appearance in the world. — Of genius the only proof is, the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before : Of genius, in the fine arts, the only infallible sign is the widening the sphere of human sensibility, for the delight, honour, and

benefit of human nature. Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe : or, if that be not allowed, it is the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is all this but an advance, or a conquest, made by the soul of the Poet? Is it to be supposed that the Reader can make progress of this kind, like an Indian Prince or General—stretched on his Palanquin, and borne by his Slaves? No, he is invigorated and inspirited by his Leader, in order that he may exert himself; for he cannot proceed in quiescence, he cannot be carried like a dead weight. Therefore to create taste is to call forth and bestow power, of which knowledge is the effect; and *there* lies the true difficulty.

As the pathetic participates of an *animal* sensation, it might seem—that, if the springs of this emotion were genuine, all men, possessed of competent knowledge of the facts and circumstances, would be instantaneously affected. And, doubtless, in the works of every true Poet will be found passages of that species of excellence, which is proved by effects immediate and universal. But there are emotions of the pathetic that are simple and direct, and others—that are complex and revolutionary; some—to which the heart yields with gentleness, others—against which it struggles with pride: these varieties are infinite as the combinations of circumstance and the constitutions of character. Remember, also, that the medium through which, in poetry, the heart is to be affected—is language; a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations. The genius of the Poet melts these down for his purpose; but they retain their shape and quality to him who is not capable of exerting, within his own mind, a corresponding energy. There is also a meditative, as well as a human, pathos; an enthusiastic, as well as an ordinary, sorrow; a sadness that has its

seat in the depths of reason, to which the mind cannot sink gently of itself — but to which it must descend by treading the steps of thought. And for the sublime, — if we consider what are the cares that occupy the passing day, and how remote is the practice and the course of life from the sources of sublimity, in the soul of Man, can it be wondered that there is little existing preparation for a Poet charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom, and to augment and spread its enjoyments?

Away, then, with the senseless iteration of the word, *popular*, applied to new works in Poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts but that all Men should run after its productions, as if urged by an appetite, or constrained by a spell ! — The qualities of writing best fitted for eager reception are either such as startle the world into attention by their audacity and extravagance ; or they are chiefly of a superficial kind, lying upon the surfaces of manners ; or arising out of a selection and arrangement of incidents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch of curiosity, and the fancy amused without the trouble of thought. But in every thing which is to send the soul into herself, to be admonished of her weakness, or to be made conscious of her power ; — wherever life and nature are described as operated upon by the creative or abstracting virtue of the imagination ; wherever the instinctive wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions uniting, in the heart of the Poet, with the meditative wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord of sublimated humanity, which is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic annunciation of the remotest future, *there*, the Poet must reconcile himself for a season to few and scattered hearers. — Grand thoughts (and Shakspeare must often have sighed over this truth), as they are most naturally and most fitly conceived in solitude, so can they not be brought forth in the midst of plaudits, without some violation

of their sanctity. Go to a silent exhibition of the productions of the Sister Art, and be convinced that the qualities which dazzle at first sight, and kindle the admiration of the multitude, are essentially different from those by which permanent influence is secured. Let us not shrink from following up these principles as far as they will carry us, and conclude with observing — that there never has been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which vicious poetry, of some kind or other, has not excited more zealous admiration, and been far more generally read, than good ; but this advantage attends the good, that the *individual*, as well as the species, survives from age to age ; whereas, of the depraved, though the species be immortal, the individual quickly *perishes* ; the object of present admiration vanishes, being supplanted by some other as easily produced ; which, though no better, brings with it at least the irritation of novelty, — with adaptation, more or less skilful, to the changing humours of the majority of those who are most at leisure to regard poetical works when they first solicit their attention.

Is it the result of the whole, that, in the opinion of the Writer, the judgment of the People is not to be respected ? The thought is most injurious ; and, could the charge be brought against him, he would repel it with indignation. The People have already been justified, and, their eulogium pronounced by implication, when it was said, above — that, of *good Poetry*, the *individual*, as well as the species, *survives*. And how does it survive but through the People ? what preserves it but their intellect and their wisdom ?

“ — Past and future, are the wings
On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
Moves the great Spirit of human knowledge — ”

MS.

The voice that issues from this Spirit, is that Vox populi which the Deity inspires. Foolish must he be who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or a transitory outcry — transitory though it be for years, local though from a Nation. Still more lamentable is his error who can believe that there is any thing of divine infallibility in the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE. Towards the Public, the Writer hopes that he feels as much deference as it is entitled to: but to the People, philosophically characterised, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves, at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future, his devout respect, his reverence, is due. He offers it willingly and readily; and, this done, takes leave of his Readers, by assuring them — that, if he were not persuaded that the Contents of these Volumes, and the Work to which they are subsidiary, evinced something of the “Vision and the Faculty divine;” and that, both in words and things, they will operate in their degree, to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honour, and the benefit of human nature, notwithstanding the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction; — from becoming at this moment, to the world, as a thing that had never been.

NOTE TO VOLUME I.

Page 258. Last line.

“ The shadow of a Danish Boy. ”

THESE Stanzas were designed to introduce a Ballad upon the Story of a Danish Prince who had fled from Battle, and, for the sake of the valuables about him, was murdered by the Inhabitant of a Cottage in which he had taken refuge. The House fell under a curse, and the Spirit of the Youth, it was believed, haunted the Valley where the crime had been committed.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

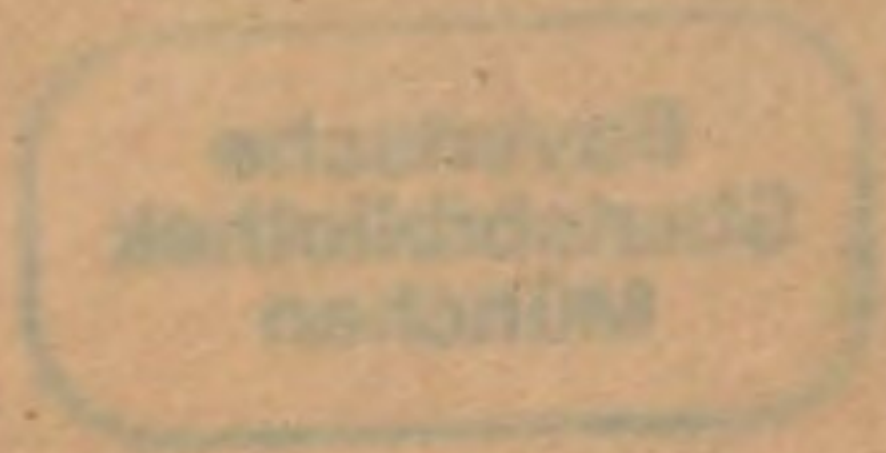
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